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# THE PRICE OF PLEASURE

By the same Author

AND THE GREEKS  
GONE ABROAD  
GONE ABROAD AGAIN  
PANORAMA

# THE PRICE OF PLEASURE

BY  
CHARLES GRAVES

1935

IVOR NICHOLSON & WATSON  
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## PREFACE

IN everybody's life a moment comes when it is time to cry "halt" and survey how far one has come and where one intends to go. Sometimes it happens early in life. Sometimes in middle age. But for the average person like myself it is, or should be, at thirty-five. Well, I am thirty-five now. Actuaries will tell you that nowadays you have a normal expectancy of more than the three-score years and ten of the Bible. But then they are only statisticians and statistics lie worse than a camera.

Maybe the advance of medical knowledge has lengthened the normal expectancy of life. But what about the advance of scientific knowledge in special reference to poison gas and aerial torpedoes? If you think of the millions of young men killed in the last campaign you will realize that the old Biblical suggestion of seventy as being the usual age at which to die is probably exaggerated. Besides, what about motor-car smashes, aeroplane crashes, petrol fumes, and cancer?

Be that as it may, I was taking stock of myself the other night. Unlike my ancestor Richard Graves, who was killed at Agincourt at the age of twenty-one and left five children, I have neither created life nor taken it. But I have married and I have knocked a man out. Compromise. But this is an age of compromise. Even our weather is a compromise.

If I had not listened to my headmaster and had shirked the responsibility of my birth by running away to the Army as a private on my eighteenth birthday, instead of being overpersuaded to stay until I was eighteen and a half and thus put myself in the way of commanding men in the field, I might well be dead. The immediate result shared by thousands of

others of the same age as myself is that I do not know whether in extremity I am a physical coward or not. That is a bad business, but it is the first answer to my mental stocktaking.

True, in my brief seven months in the Army (I missed France by nineteen days) I fought a sergeant in the Australian Light Horse—an encounter which ended rapidly when he broke his thumb on my bayonet standard. True, from the age of nine to eighteen I was taught boxing. But that is no criterion of cowardice one way or the other. And it still leaves me with an essential question-mark. The chances are that to-day I should be less of a coward than I would have been sixteen years ago, if only because an acquired snobbism would prevent me from showing I am yellow—if I am. But still I don't know.

That is something that Life has not yet taught me. On the other hand, I have learnt a lot. Thus I know that the odds against a happy marriage are about 800 to 1; that the odds against having children of whom you can be proud are about 5 to 1; that happiness is a figure of speech; that Nemesis, the law of compensation, is truer to-day than ever; that malice breeds its own revenge; that revenge is the most exhausting and profitless feeling in the world; that the art of life is to avoid friction; that the greatest motives in life are created by reaction from one's early life; that the most important years are between the ages of nine and thirteen; that few men can lose gracefully.

To have any chance of success in life I have learnt that one must be able "to take it"; that the reason why Jews succeed is because they can never be snubbed; that tact is worth all the genius in the world; that regular perspiration is worth twenty doctors (look at Harry Preston); that the best holiday is a different kind of work; that unless you specialize you will never get above two hundred and fifty a year; that marriage will either make you or break you; that it can never leave you the same; that it is madness to disbelieve in luck and the

cycles of luck ; that if you are cold-bloodedly wise you will have nothing to do in business with people who are continuously unlucky ; that the two greatest influences in a man's life are his mother and his wife ; that if he is lucky in both nothing can stop him ; that you have to spend money to make money ; that a happy marriage depends primarily on a similarity of tastes. I have learnt that you must at all costs keep your youthful enthusiasms ; that an ability to sleep at any time of the day or night is worth a queen's dowry ; that the hardest lesson to learn is that you must allow your heroes to remain your heroes, even if you become their valet. In thirty-five years I have learnt to like foreigners, particularly Bavarians and Austrians. I have discovered that the Southerners of any country—England, France, the United States, Germany, and Scotland, for example, are more charming than the Northerners. I have learnt that golf professionals are the best type of any paid athlete in the world. I have learnt that with the exception of Tom Webster, Bud Flanagan, Eddie Gray and Beatrice Lillie there is no humourist in the world who "plays up" out of hours.

Odd bits of knowledge that have come my way are that if you are ever blackmailed you should go straight to Scotland Yard ; that if you are so silly as to back horses and have no special information you should back Perryman in a sprint ; and that contract bridge is purely a game of the slump.

Above all, I have learnt that the one thing that matters in life is to acquire character ; and that the kindest and rarest thing in life is to speak kind words of a dog which has been given a bad name.

I have learnt that conventions are the result of the massed wisdom of centuries of wise men, and that to go against them is crass.

I am still in doubt as to whether it is possible to buck the Conservative Party. As I say, I don't know whether I am

a physical coward. I am still at a loss to understand why a belief in reincarnation is not universal. But I am certain that, after the crudities of murder and sex, the most interesting subject in life is other people's money. Hence this book.

CHARLES GRAVES.

*February 1935.*

70 GLOUCESTER PLACE,  
PORTMAN SQUARE, W.1.

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# THE PRICE OF PLEASURE

## CHAPTER I

### THE BIG GAMBLE

ALMOST anybody who has ever been on the Continent will think that to run a casino would be the most profitable enterprise imaginable.

As a matter of fact, one or two Englishmen have put money into certain French casinos. But they took it out as soon as they could, which was not soon enough. This looks absurd when you think of the *cagnotte* with its 5 per cent. going down the slot on each winning bank. It looks still more absurd when you think of the thousands of times a day when the croupiers say, "*Merci, messieurs, pour le personnel.*"

For it does not take much intelligence to realize that though the croupiers thank you so profusely for the chips you throw them when you have had a coup, they get only a very small percentage of it. It is a fact that in the course of the ten weeks' season at Le Touquet, three years ago, the tips given by temporarily lucky gamblers totalled 16,000,000 francs.

Many people, too, might think that the only risk they would be running by investing money in a casino would be the danger of bad cheques. In reality there is little or nothing in this. Two years ago at Easter £50,000 worth of cheques were cashed by visitors at Le Touquet in the course of three days and only £117-odd were bad.

And then, look at the tremendous charges for the drinks, the cigarettes, and the dinners in the restaurant attached to a casino. At Biarritz last summer a cup of coffee or a glass of

beer cost 30 francs (something like 8s.) in the dance club attached to the casino. In the casinos of Deauville and Cannes the lowest price you paid, whether it was for a glass of beer or a champagne cocktail, was 8 or 10 francs.

What, then, is the risk in running a casino? The answer is that the French Government automatically takes 60 per cent. of the gross profits. On top of that the local Council (or its equivalent in French) takes anything from 18 to 22 per cent. This leaves you with a gross 18 or 22 per cent., out of which to pay for everything. On top of that you have your income-tax and, if you are lucky, your super-tax also to pay.

Few people realize, moreover, what a gigantic staff is necessary for conducting a casino properly. Now that roulette is permitted in France you might think that everything in the garden is lovely for the French casinos. It is nothing of the sort. To begin with there has been the extreme difficulty of obtaining croupiers able to announce immediately whether the number is red or black, odd or even, over eighteen or under eighteen, as well as the exact amount of the winning stakes, either in full or *à cheval*, *carré*, *transversale*, *double transversale*, first, second, or third column, first, second, or third dozen.

What is more, the French Government insists that before it gives its concession for roulette the manager of the casino has to have so many million francs as a float to pay any possible losses. At Biarritz last summer, though the float was huge, the maximum you could put on a number was only 180 francs. For roulette obviously has this disadvantage for the casino—that if a gambler wins he is winning the casino's money and not that of his next-door neighbour as happens at *chemin de fer*.

The greatest character in international gambling is, of course, Zographos, the head of the Greek syndicate. What

he has won in the past ten years is nobody's business, but it must be £500,000. His capital is so big that it can stand any strain. That an adverse run can occur was shown last year at Biarritz when the local syndicate lost 35,000,000 francs in the first three weeks of the season. But in the last fortnight they got it all back, and another 36,000,000 more.

The biggest win against the Greek syndicate was achieved in 1926 by Sydney Beer, who now devotes his talents to conducting orchestras. He won 7,000,000 francs in two evenings. Alas! he went back and lost a great deal of it. But still he was credited with a net win of £35,000 in the course of his ten days.

The biggest English gambler to-day is Ambrose, the orchestra leader. This last summer he was 250,000 francs ahead of the game in a fortnight, then he dropped it all and another 750,000 francs. Whereupon my wife lent him a gipsy ring and he won 300,000 back (about £4,000) in an hour and a half.

Two big gamblers in the South of France have been Lady Baillie and Sir Alfred Butt. Both are credited with winning and losing 500,000 francs in forty-eight hours or so.

Then in the past I have seen the Aga Khan winning and losing hundreds of pounds every five minutes at Deauville. Whether he was ultimately a winner is his affair, not mine. But I can say this: The tips he has given to the croupier in recognition of his winning coups would save me the trouble of having to work again, if ever I could acquire them. I could say the same of Madame de Bittencourt, too.

There is also another young card-player on a big scale, Stephen Raphael, who has frequently won £1,500 in an evening. He sometimes took the bank at Juan-les-Pins last summer.

To get back to the business of running a casino, however. In the ordinary way casino proprietors or managing directors

are very secretive about their figures ; but René Léon, the presiding genius of Monte Carlo, has nothing to conceal. It is true that the concession given to French casinos to play roulette has been a severe blow, for until then it was the monopoly of Monte Carlo (I do not count the roulette without a zero in Belgium) and had to be counteracted by diminishing Monte Carlo profits from *chemin de fer* by reducing the *cagnotte* from 5 per cent. to  $2\frac{1}{2}$  per cent.

Nevertheless, René Léon has no anxiety. Each year the balance sheet of the "Anonymous Society of Sea Bathing and Strangers," as it is quaintly called, is published and makes quite agreeable reading for its shareholders. So it was without any hesitation that René Léon told me of the facts and figures (never previously published in full) of the Casino of Monte Carlo.

In the summer there are 404 croupiers employed at the Casino and Summer Sporting Club. In the winter there are 620 employed in the big Casino and Winter Sporting Club.

Their salaries begin at £350 a year and increase in the case of *Chefs de Jeux* to £1,200. In addition there are 46 special men detailed to walk round the tables in dinner jackets at night for the surveillance of the play. There are others who are dressed exactly like the clients. These are more or less secret service men, whose duty it is to watch any very high play, particularly a system that is working successfully.

There are 113 uniformed guards in those pale grey uniforms which used to be surmounted by blue and red French *képis*. There are 320 domestic servants, barmen, cloakroom men, and footmen. In fact, all told, there is an indoor staff of 1,000.

This does not include the 87 gardeners, who each receive £3 a week, nor the 200 employees in the gasworks which have to be operated at a loss to the Casino in return for the gambling concession granted by the Prince of Monaco.

Obviously there is always great danger of fire in a place

where people leave lighted cigarettes lying about haphazardly, and consequently there are 113 firemen. There are no fewer than 210 men employed in repairing chairs and tables, making chairs and tables, and painting walls, not to mention those employed in the printing works for bills, announcements, posters, and so on.

There are also 26 men and women employed in the thermal establishment for massage, douches, as well as for the medical gymnasium. To this we must add 48 electricians, an orchestra of 94, a chorus of 67, cashiers and accountants (another 74). All told, the Casino and the Winter Sporting Club employs between 2,700 and 3,800 people.

Just look now at some of the costs. Some are amusing and more or less insignificant, such as the 635 suits at £4 a time, bought annually from a firm of London tailors for the croupiers. Contrast that with the 1,800,000 francs a year spent on electricity and the 19,000 electric-light bulbs at 4.50 francs each used every year.

I spoke just now of the necessity of providing gas for the whole of Monaco, which is part of the gambling concession. This means a loss each year to the Casino of nearly 4,000,000 francs. The bill merely for cleaning rooms and the upkeep of all the running repairs is 400,000 francs a year, together with a wage-roll of 300,000 francs just for the men who polish and scrub the floors.

The orchestra, if you please, costs 1,600,000 francs a year, and the charge for musical copyright is a flat 250,000 francs a year.

The Opera alone costs 3,500,000 francs each year, which is exactly thirteen times more than the receipts. Such is the price of maintaining a reputation. Those lovely gardens cost 750,000 francs a year to maintain; and, all told, the salaries alone paid by René Léon to the employees of the Casino and its subsidiaries is no less than 26,500,000 francs.

An even more startling figure is that the total expenses amount to 58,500,000 francs a year. This includes the 250,000 francs which the Motor Grand Prix costs each year, and the 10,000 francs which every new roulette wheel costs (they had to have three more last December). It includes, further, the cost of playing-cards. I forget how many thousands of packs are represented by the 100,000 francs which were spent on them last year, but, anyway, that is the figure. One other entertaining little item is the 4,892 francs which 410 new croupiers' rakes cost last year.

Monte Carlo, of course, is lucky in that it has a regular clientele all the year round. True, it has in addition two main seasons—August and September on the one hand, and January, February, and March on the other. Cannes and Nice, too, are in the same position. But the others have to get all their money back in the course of six weeks and two or three week-ends.

Nothing can be more desolate than Deauville the day after the running of the Grand Prix. The whole place is dead from September to Easter or Whitsun, and even between Easter and Whitsun it is again comatose. Biarritz advertises that it is going to have roulette all the year round. But if rumour is correct already half the local shopkeepers are ruined by gambling, and the remainder are too shrewd to try their luck any more.

Think of the overhead expenses eating their way through your reserves—during the dead months. Contemplate the growing popularity of cruises and cures, both of which are taking toll of the casino. Regard for a moment the infuriating way in which, even when your visitors have been lured to your neighbourhood, they keep out of the casino and play bridge in their friends' villas.

Tot up the expenses of advertising your resort in the newspapers and smart magazines, of guaranteeing the French rail-

ways a certain number of fares if they supply you with a grand European express train service every day during the season, of keeping the local mayor "sweet" with all kinds of free tickets, of providing expensive orchestras, cabarets, swimming-pools, and still more expensive golf courses for the benefit of the English visitors (René Léon recently spent 6,000,000 francs merely for the site of a new winter golf course near Monte Carlo).

If you are still not frightened by the expenses, think of all the interest you are losing on the roulette "float," of the frightening way in which American visitors are dwindling, and, finally, of the exchange, which has set up such a barrier against the rest of the world that you are lucky if you get one-twentieth of the people who used to visit your casino.

No wonder they have descended to the final degradation of installing fruit machines even in the Casino at Monte Carlo.

## CHAPTER II

### NIGHT LIFE MONEY

I HAVE always thought that if I were not a writer I would like to go into the hotel or restaurant business. People are always more interesting than things to me, and the life of a restaurateur in particular is a series of personal contacts.

In the past twelve years London has become almost as well stocked with first-class restaurants as Paris. In the past three years it has become the gayest city in the world, as we are so often told. This is largely because the habit of dining out among the Upper Four Hundred has increased so much; whereas the nobility of France, Germany, Spain, and Italy do most of their entertaining at home.

To be successful in the restaurant business to-day, however, you need to have at least twenty years' experience of the West End to be able to sort out the best from the second best. A successful restaurateur must know who is likely to give a "rubber" cheque, who is going to be more trouble than he is worth, who is a credit to his restaurant, and who is not. He needs to know the private lives to a considerable extent of all his regulars. He must be better posted even than the gossip writers on liaisons, impending divorces, and the like. By force of circumstances he has taken the place of the family butler as the receiver of confidences and father confessor.

(Ferraro of the Berkeley makes it an invariable rule that all notes sent from men to women or from boys to girls in his restaurant shall pass through his hands for "vetting." And very often they never reach their destination !)

He must know what people do for a living. He must see that the dressmaker is put some little distance away from any

good client who may possibly owe her money and whose meal will be spoilt at the thought of the bill she has not paid. He must separate the sporting nobleman from the book-maker. In fact, he must know how to "dress" the room. This is an art that many head waiters and restaurant managers never really acquire, and yet it is almost as important as good cooking, a good cellar, and a good orchestra, not to mention a good cabaret.

(The late Luigi Naintr  of the Embassy used to put recently divorced couples at adjoining tables quite deliberately to give the rest of the room a laugh.)

He must take great care that women wearing the same models, even though they are in different colours, are put at tables as far away as possible; in the same way two others in frocks which would clash are also placed at opposite ends of the room. In fact, dressing a room is just like the successful production of a romantic comedy. What is more, it is a series of first nights. With all this, he must bear in mind that royalty or some other illustrious personage may come in and ask for a table, which must be available, at the very last minute.

The next time you go into a smart restaurant you will find that up to midnight and even afterwards there is always one good table which the restaurant manager has up his sleeve.

Yes, a good restaurateur needs to know almost everything. He must be able to tell at once between chinchilla and the best imitation thereof; of jewellery and paste; of happy and unhappy marriages.

He must also, of course, know all about food. Here is a tip. Any dish which has the word *Portugaise* means that it is done with tomatoes. The words *Bonne femme* involve mushrooms. *V ronique* means grapes. *Sauce riche* indicates lobster. *Princesse* denotes asparagus. *P rigourdine* automatically means truffles. Rice is indicated by the word

*Piedmontaise*, just as the presence of spaghetti is shown by the word *Milanaise*, potatoes by *Parmentier*, and sweet corn by *Washington*.

One of the difficulties with a restaurant manager is that by law he is supposed to permit anybody into his establishment if they are properly dressed, sober, and presumably able to pay the bill. How then is it that certain restaurants are smart and others are not? The answer rests with the restaurant manager, who has a dozen different ways of keeping out undesirables. The most obvious, of course, is to say that, even if the room is evidently only half full, all the tables are reserved. Another is to see that deliberately slow service and cold food is given to unwanted guests who have somehow succeeded in being shown to a table. But it is not fair to give away all the tricks of the trade. Of this, however, you can be sure. If anybody complains to you that they do not like some particular smart restaurant, you may be certain that this is because the restaurant manager does not want their custom and deliberately takes no trouble with them. After all, the tone of a restaurant is as important to the proprietor as that of a Stradivarius is to a violinist.

Many thousands of pounds are sunk in a good restaurant. Take Quaglino's, for example. The turnover is more than £200,000 a year. That may startle you, but it does not occur to the average person how much work is done behind the scenes. Even in the case of the members of the staff whom they see, such as waiters, cloakroom attendants, and so forth, few could make an intelligent guess as to the number employed. At Quaglino's, for example, there are over a hundred waiters and commis, as the young chaps with white aprons are called. There are six cocktail men, and twelve cloakroom men, ten in the administration and two detectives. In addition, there are forty-five cooks, four cellar men, three coffee men, twenty dish washers, a staff of six in the linen room, five store-

keepers, three *hors d'oeuvre* men, and five pastrycooks. In all, the staff is no less than 270.

There is, for example, the special buyer of live fish, lobsters and prawns, who goes to Billingsgate at 5 o'clock every morning after consultation the previous night with the chef. Another buyer goes to Smithfield at 8 a.m. each day. Fortunately for Quaglino the fresh fruit and vegetables arrive for his selection at half-past ten each day in large lorries. Here is a typical day's order: 500 chickens, 200 lobsters, 350 sole, 25 trout, 2 large salmon, 500 portions of asparagus.

All kinds of expenses crop up which would never occur to you. The annual bill for flowers on the table is £1,000. The electricity comes to £250 a month. The laundry comes to £1,500 a year, which shows that there is a real excuse for a cover charge. Think, too, of the 2,000 rolls and 50 pounds of butter provided free each day. Then there is the question of decorations. Quaglino has been open five years, and has been redecorated twice after the original opening. The original decorations cost £12,000; the first redecoration cost £14,000; the second cost £12,000. The day that Quaglino gave me these statistics two sofas were ruined in one evening by cigarettes, a mere trifle of £20 being necessary for their upholstering.

Another pretty little item is £2,000 a year for glass and china—merely in breakages. On top of that the models have to be changed every few months. Silver is another very expensive item. In fact, the upkeep alone of a restaurant like Quaglino's is £10,000 a year, apart from the decorations. Nor must one forget as a further charge the interest on several thousand pounds locked up, in the form of champagnes, clarets, burgundies, and other wines, in the cellar, the total value of which is about £11,000. I had almost forgotten the item of £1,000 a year merely for the clothes of the uniformed staff.

Bad debts over the first five years came to £6,000, although now these have been reduced to a minimum.

Nor must one forget the feeding of the staff. They have four meals a day. Chicken legs, which in the eyes of the gourmet are much better than the white of chicken, are, luckily for the staff, considered inelegant by the majority of diners out, so they form a regular dish on the downstairs menu.

When you take into further consideration the orchestra and the cabaret, it is not surprising to learn that the profits on the gross turnover of £200,000 is whittled down to something nearer 8 per cent. than 10 per cent., despite the fact that champagne costs double the price of what you can get it from your wine merchant, and that a slice of melon may set you back 4s. 6d., let us say.

In addition to everything else, the restaurateur must possess enormous tact. If a good client goes there one day with a girl friend, and the next day with his wife, it is up to the restaurant manager to say on the second occasion to the client, "It's a long time since I saw you, sir." Yes, tact is essential. He must remain smiling even when a client complains loudly that the best bit of white chicken obtainable is rabbit, because it was cooked with cream and sherry. He must show no loss of temper when guests think it smart to pretend that they know everything when they are entirely ignorant.

"It is a fact," Quagliano told me, "that one gets 70 per cent. of complaints at lunch time and the remaining 30 per cent. at dinner. I have never had one at supper yet. The reason is that clients are not in such a good humour in the middle of the day, and grow increasingly good tempered towards midnight. The smallest meal I have ever supplied was for a party of visitors from the United States. They ordered salad. The bill was 2s. 6d. Including the cloth and so on, I actually lost 5s. on the meal, quite apart from the proportion of the

floor space they occupied, their share of the orchestra and the cabaret.

"One has amusing experiences every day. At dinner time last night an American visitor said he had enjoyed himself very much, and tipped me 2s. 6d. Of course, I took it.

"In the last five years two or three hundred couples have got engaged here and are now dining safely at home. Oh, yes, there is plenty of romance here. The best part of it is that every week some young couple comes here to celebrate their wedding or engagement anniversary.

"After a time one discovers very quickly what certain regular clients prefer to order. The Prince of Wales, for example, is fond of oysters, blue trout, baby lamb, and spinach. King Alfonso likes caviare, sole, grouse, and almost every dish which is cooked with rice. The King of Greece likes partridge and a special way of doing breast of chicken. This is fried and served with truffles. To be honest, my own favourite meal is scrambled eggs and bacon. If I cannot have that I like almost any dish, provided it is done with rice."

Manetta, of the Savoy Grill, by contrast, always has a leg of chicken with spinach and rice in a bowl of soup at midday and 9 p.m., while at 2 a.m., when the clients have gone, he always eats a bacon sandwich with the chef.

Quaglino says his most fastidious clients are Lord Furness, Sir James Dunn, and Cartier the jeweller. "My waiters are on tiptoe when they see them coming. Only the best is good enough for them."

There are restaurants so successful that practically every waiter has a motor-car, and it is a fact that even the page-boys have motor-bicycles. They certainly deserve their good fortune. Their hours are exceedingly long. The nervous strain to which they are submitted is very considerable. They must always look pleased with life, even if they have a headache or the clients are more than usually irritating.

It is safe to say that if it were not for London's restaurants a high percentage of the visitors who come to England from the United States and the Continent would rally in Paris and we should never see the colour of their money.

So, though the majority of restaurateurs are of Italian origin, if not of Italian nationality, they may be considered one of our most considerable assets.

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CHAPTER III  
FINANCING A PLAY

EVERY year about £900,000 is sunk in theatrical enterprises in the West End alone. A quarter of a million of this is taken up by a dozen big musical shows. The remainder is put up by backers for straight shows, ballets, and small revues.

Theatrical investments are very largely speculative. It is possible, if you are lucky, to be almost certain of a "stone ginger" production, to give the professional name for a sure-fire hit. *Conversation Piece*, for example, was "stone ginger." Noel Coward is the biggest box-office draw among dramatists in the country. He is also the biggest draw among impresarios. Yvonne Printemps has a huge following, and His Majesty's Theatre holds the record for the smallest number of shows put on since the War—for nearly all of them run a year or more.

In the case of *Conversation Piece*, half the seats had been booked for the first six weeks even before the opening date had been announced. The show cost about £10,000 to put on, apart from the running expenses. This sum was got back, according to schedule, within seven weeks.

The intelligent producer budgets for a minimum margin of £1,500 between the running costs and the capacity receipts of the theatre. *Conversation Piece's* running costs were a little over £2,000 a week. The gross capacity of His Majesty's is £4,900. But you must deduct one-sixth for entertainment tax and 5 per cent. of two-thirds of the seats sold, which is commission to the ticket agencies. If you work this out you will find that the margin of profit is over £1,800 a week.

One of the first things you discover in theatrical finance is that all the stories about £600-a-week theatre rentals is nonsense. Theatres are very seldom rented to-day. The proprietors, instead, take  $12\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. or so of the gross profits. Some, like Associated Theatre Properties (London) Limited, of which Sir Harold Wernher is the chairman, have subsidiary companies which finance shows as well. This group controls the Adelphi, with a gross weekly capacity of £6,200; His Majesty's, with £4,900; the Gaiety, £3,700; the Lyric, £3,100; the Apollo, £2,560; the Cambridge, £3,800; the Shaftesbury, £3,100; and the St. James's, £2,400.

In the case of the last-named theatre, *The Late Christopher Bean* was making a net profit of £700 a week from the first week, in which the initial £1,000 cost of production was recouped. It can only have been equalled by C. B. Cochran's revue *Odds and Ends*, which was put on in 1914 at the cost of £200 and made (despite an initial bad Press) no less than £30,000.

The average theatre-goer does not realize that the greatest production costs are the rehearsals. Those of *Nymph Errant* amounted to £4,000, because, being composed of a series of scenes often with no climax, the synchronization of the lighting and scene-shifting had to be perfect. After midnight, scene-shifters and others get double pay; and after midnight on Sundays they get quadruple pay. That runs away with a lot of money. There are also the salaries for a full week of the small-part actors and the orchestra.

But let us lift the curtain over a theatre's employees who never appear on the stage. At His Majesty's, apart from the thirty-five in the orchestra, there are ninety other members of the staff to be paid. There are twenty programme sellers, fifteen barmaids, twelve commissionaires, four people in the box office, and five cloakroom men, which leaves thirty-four scene-shifters, electricians, carpenters, and property men.

Sixty per cent. of the receipts disappear each week in wages and salaries.

Producers and backers want the Government to realize that as the majority of theatrical employees, whether on the stage or behind the scenes, pay income-tax anyway, it is harsh to clamp on the entertainment tax. This tax is applied whether a show is making a profit or not, and is one-sixth of the gross takings each week. Many a show would have made a profit but for this.

*Nymph Errant*, indeed, made money for its backers. But of the £100,000 it took in its run of 160 performances or so, the Government collected £16,666 in six months.

To say that the public pays the tax and not the producer is, according to Mr. C. B. Cochran, nonsense.

Theatre-goers have only a certain amount of money to spend each week. "If you take £60,000 on a show, the Government collects £10,000," the producer explained to me. "Your show may have cost £10,000 to produce, and might have made £10,000 profit. As it is, the Government takes it and you are left with a loss, for you do not even get the interest on the capital you laid out. It is iniquitous that one should have to pay tax on losses as well as on profits. I know of no other business where the turnover is so taxed. Moreover, in the theatrical business we use all kinds of materials, like feathers and silks, which pay very heavy duties. Again, we employ all kinds of people who pay income-tax, and yet who would otherwise be on the dole and would be a charge to the State."

Salaries in the theatre, even for the rank and file, may seem high to the layman when he compares them with those that rule in other professions. Yet when you consider how irregular they are, it is understandable. A man who is getting £20 or £30 or £40 a week is admittedly not doing the equivalent amount of work which that salary would entail in other jobs. Actually he is worth just half that

amount of money, but on the other hand, he is lucky if he gets as much as six months' work in the year.

There are few philanthropists behind the theatre, and even the big-salaried stars are in most cases worth the money. In the boom years they were paid anything from £100 to £500 a week. George Robey received £800 a week for a certain period. But those times have passed. To-day a star is satisfied with a percentage of the takings and some guarantee, the maximum percentage being 10 per cent.

During *Private Lives*, Noel Coward received over £1,100 a week. He had his percentage as author, producer, actor, and as third partner in the show. All he missed was a percentage of the takings of the bar, the programmes, the cloak-rooms, and the hire of queue-seats. These are considerable, and often amount to £400 or £500 a week.

Old W. W. Kelly, who died in his eighties at Liverpool not long ago, made a fortune out of a piece called *Royal Divorce*, which ran at the now defunct Princess Theatre in Oxford Street. Towards the end of its phenomenal run he gave the seats free and relied on the takings from the programmes, cloakrooms, and bars. This fact is vouched for by Mr. C. B. Cochran.

"Mind you," the latter will tell you, "you couldn't do that with a big modern show like *Cavalcade*. I estimated that this would cost £25,000 to £30,000 to put on, and that the running expenses would be not less than £2,500 and not more than £3,000 a week. Actually the production came to £29,000, and the running costs to £2,600 weekly. We got back the production costs within eight weeks at Drury Lane, which has the biggest seating capacity of any theatre in London except the Lyceum. But unless you play to capacity, as we did, from the start, you will, in my experience, always lose money. If the takings drop £5 one week it means that the terrific pressure is decreasing.

"After the ninth week of *Escape Me Never!* I took the trouble to go round and tell Elizabeth Bergner that the show was up 30s. on the previous week (thanks to a few extra people in the standing-room-only section), whereas a rival show was £23 down. She did not realize how important this was. But I did."

Here is the division of receipts for one week at a famous theatre :

	£	s.	d.
Bars . . . . .	242	19	8
Programmes . . . . .	110	3	3
Cloakrooms . . . . .	31	4	0
Sale of music, books, etc.	10	18	6
Opera glasses . . . . .	4	4	0
Queue chairs . . . . .	15	8	0
	<hr/>		
	£414	17	5
	<hr/>		

According to Mr. Cochran a show will invariably lose money in the long run if it does not get its production costs back in the first eight weeks. Many producers go on and on in the hopes of making money or at least breaking even. They never do. There was a show not long ago at a famous theatre which many of you must have seen during its eight months' run. It cost several thousands to produce. But the backers never recouped their original production costs. It just went on week after week tantalizingly enough paying the running costs and a hundred or two over. But that was all.

Of course, the £29,000 which *Cavalcade* cost is above the average of even a big musical show. Usually this ranges between £10,000 and £20,000, and nearer the former than the latter. Between that and the £3,000 which is the cost of a first-class drawing-room comedy, comes the £6,000 production of *Magnolia Street*. This show demanded a large

cast, although it was not musical. On the other hand, the scenery cost little in comparison with the costumes. As you know, *Magnolia Street* was Mean Street stuff. Yet nothing is more difficult or more expensive than to get costumes of the 1914 period which look used. The difference between the clothes of the working classes then and now is slight, but noticeable. Worst of all, was the problem of the shoes. They were impossible to find, and expensive to have made out of poor material in the 1914 to 1923 styles.

With the usual straight play the cost of production ranges between £700 and £3,000, with the running expenses averaging £1,250 a week. In the view of many experts, however, the risk of putting on a £3,000 straight play is greater than staging a £10,000 musical show with running costs of £2,500, which are nearly as much as the whole production costs of the other.

The musical show, if it has a good cast and lilting tunes, ought to do well, whether the jokes are funny or not. Whereas with a straight play there may be some psychological factor or some unsympathetic character or some twist to the plot which does not prove popular, and the show becomes an expensive flop.

Yet expense is not the real criterion. Look at what the Co-optimists made with their curtains and pierrot costumes and a grand piano. Look, too, at the £100,000 which *Bitter Sweet* made, and the £80,000 or so which *The Farmer's Wife* took.

There are no real rules, as the success of *The Barretts of Wimpole Street* proved. That broke all the rules. The outlay was tiny. It was a period play without music, and it made a fortune.

Experts will tell you that the worst thing for the theatre is snow, after which comes fog, and intense heat like that of last summer. Yet *The Late Christopher Bean* was not affected

by anything. The ideal weather from the box-office point of view is a dull dry day. Cold weather and rain are bad.

Audiences also vary every night of the week, and different lines will get the laughs in a comedy on different nights. Thursday is smart and sophisticated. Saturday is the most keen-witted. Monday is the coldest. Friday is the dullest. Tuesday is absolutely neutral, and Wednesday is smart without being sophisticated.

Why do plays enjoy shorter runs than they did? To-day there are few people with the spending capacity for the higher-priced seats. There continues to be the same rush at the start, but it does not last. The £2,000-a-year family man, for example, who was the backbone of the dress circle, now goes three or four times a year instead of at least once a month. Another reason for the shorter runs is that the popularity of the cinema has caused people to stop applauding as much as they did, even in the theatre. So when they get home and someone asks them if there was much applause, they reflect for a minute and realize that there was not. The next stage in their mental process is to wonder, in the light of this, whether it was such a good show as they thought it was. So when the next person asks them what they thought about it (and the theatre depends very largely on this hand to mouth publicity) they say, "Oh, not bad, but there wasn't much applause." And another theatre-goer may be discouraged from buying tickets.

There is not much more to say about the £ s. d. of the theatre except that the extras are paid £2 10s. a week and the chorus girls £3 10s. to £4. They certainly earn it. Authors receive royalties from 2 per cent. to 10 per cent. of the gross takings. All, that is, except Bernard Shaw, who insists on 15 per cent.

There now. I thought I had written nearly 3,000 words about theatrical finance without bringing in the old gentleman's name, but I have fallen at the last fence.

## CHAPTER IV

£2,000 OR 2d.?

ALL the year round is the season of tipping, and though we are told that it is more blessed to give than to receive, holidays fill many people with real dread because they do not know how to tip. Tipping is indeed an art. You don't want to overdo it, unless you are a moral coward; and unless you are mean you do not want to be stingy.

Management after management of every kind of establishment, from barbers' shops to restaurants, have tried to kill the "pernicious" habit. They even put up notices to say that it is strictly forbidden, and that if any employee is caught receiving a tip he will be instantly dismissed. But no threats can stop it. Tipping has gone on since the first Crusader gave a ducat to a strange valet for putting him back into the saddle after he had been knocked off in the jousting tournament. It will go on until human nature changes. And that means never.

Personally I tip rather too well. But that is not moral cowardice. It is because the great art of life is to avoid friction, and if you tip well you are well taken care of and in consequence are better enabled to earn your living.

To most people tipping means tipping waiters. I read recently that Gabb, the head waiter of the Grand Hotel at Eastbourne, left over £49,000. He deserved it. Mockett, the head porter of the Savoy, left £20,000. There are two reasons for these large sums. The first is that the public does not know how to tip, and the second is that these lucky men received not only tips in cash. They received Stock Exchange tips as well. The biggest individual tip of which I have certain knowledge was given to a head waiter in

London in 1929 by an American. It was £250, in recognition of the fact that he had been so well looked after, and the wines and dishes chosen so successfully at a certain business lunch, that he made about £45,000 on the deal.

That was, of course, for special services rendered. But in the ordinary course of events, hotel guests ought always to have their tipping done for them by adding 5 per cent. or 10 per cent. to their bill and leaving it to the management to distribute it equally. Otherwise all kinds of deserving members of the staff are left out. If you do your tipping yourself, you are very much inclined only to tip the valet and *femme de chambre*, waiter and hall porter. But what about the others? To give you an idea of all the people you have forgotten, I append a list of those members of the staff who benefit when you do the right thing and leave the tipping to the management. It is on the basis of £5, though, of course, it can be scaled down, and was supplied me by Cigolini, the manager of the Dorchester.

GRATUITY OF £5

	£	s.	d.
Maid . . . .	1	0	0
Floor waiter . . . .	12	6	
Valet . . . .	15	0	
Enquiry . . . .	5	0	
Hall porter . . . .	10	0	
Porters . . . .	5	0	
Head night porter . . . .	7	6	
Night porters . . . .	5	0	
Page boys . . . .	3	6	
Liftmen . . . .	5	0	
Night waiter . . . .	2	6	
Carriage attendants . . . .	4	0	
Night valet . . . .	2	6	
Cloakroom . . . .	2	6	

Another advantage of this system is that you are saved the nightmare of a row of smiling servitors, who spring up from nowhere just as you leave.

Many of you are no doubt on a cruise as you read this. Here, too, I can simplify proceedings. For I asked Montagu Brame, Chief Purser of the *Arandora Star*, as to the right thing to do. This is what he said, and you can quote him, just as I am doing. "Much the best thing is to do your tipping weekly, instead of at the end of the voyage. If you are on an expensive cruise you should give the table steward and the cabin steward 10s. each week, the bath steward 5s. a week, and the deck steward 2s. 6d. a week. The smoke-room steward you will presumably tip at the time on a 10 per cent. basis. If you take your wife, give the cabin steward 14s. a week, and the stewardess 6s. a week. If you are on an inexpensive cruise, cut it all down by half. Don't forget, though, that you'll probably get better service if you do the tipping weekly instead of at the end of the cruise."

Have you ever received a tip yourself, apart from a sovereign as a child presented by a rich uncle or godfather? I did once. It was in 1926 at a *thé dansant* in the Restaurant des Ambassadeurs at Cannes. Someone dared me to ask one of three very pretty South American girls to dance. I took the dare, went over, clicked my heels and bowed over the table. One of them got up at once and danced with me. When the tune stopped, she gave me a hundred-franc note. She thought I was a gigolo, and that is the regulation price you pay for them on the Continent. But it is unnecessary to give it until the end of the afternoon or evening. Moreover, if you dance once with a gigolo and not liking his style, don't accept his invitation to dance again, there is no reason why you should pay him anything. On the other hand, if you dance with him twice or more, a hundred francs is the fee for the session that

etiquette demands—not that he can do anything about it if you give him nothing.

In casinos tipping by successful gamblers is on a terrific scale. As I have said, in 1929, during the ten weeks' season at Le Touquet, the amount of money given to the croupiers (you know: "*Merci, monsieur, pour le personnel*") came to 16,000,000 francs, which even then was £128,000. Needless to say, the croupiers saw very little indeed of it, which is one reason why I seldom give this particular kind of tip. On the other hand, you cannot help tipping for your hat and coat in a restaurant, wherever you are. Someone worked out once that it cost him £30 a year to redeem his silk hat from cloak-rooms. That is an exaggeration. But it cannot be less than £15 a year for the average member of the smart supper crowd. The three cloak-room attendants at a famous West End hotel pay £1,000 for the privilege of holding their job—and live very comfortably indeed on the surplus.

Waiters don't get any retainer from a restaurant, though one or two "Captains" and *maitres d'hôtel* get a guarantee from the *tronc*, as the communal fund is known, into which all tips are put each day.

Taxicab men are either owners of the cabs they drive, or else hire them from companies. In this event there are two systems. One is that the driver gives a third of all the takings marked on the clock, except the extra fares and baggage charges, and keeps the remainder, including the tips, for himself. The other is that he pays 8s. 6d. a day or night for the cab, and takes everything. This may simplify your tipping in that particular instance.

Alas! very few owners of estates in the country follow Lord Derby's example and let their house-party guests know that the servants do not expect tips. For butlers and others can make a week-end at a big house almost as expensive as staying at an hotel. Then look what you have to pay

beaters and loaders if you are staying in Scotland at this time of year. Ten pounds goes nowhere if you stay a fortnight. As for yacht owners who win a race, they have to give away nearly all the prize money to the crew.

Each member of the crew gets 5s. "starting money" in any event. In addition, each gets £1 for a first, 15s. for second place, and 10s. for a third; while on the bigger vessels the captain gets an extra £2.

Luckiest of all recipients of tips are jockeys. By the rules of the Turf they are only entitled to 5 guineas for a winning ride, but it is a recognized rule that the owner gives his jockey a tip of 10 per cent. of the value of the stakes when he wins a race. If it is a classic, like the Derby, the jockey gets still more. I have twice asked the Maharaja of Rajpipla what he gave Charlie Smirke for steering Windsor Lad to victory at Epsom. But he was too coy to tell me. I understand, however, it was £1,500. What a tip for three minutes' work! "But then," said "Pip" in self-defence, "after all, he risked his neck, didn't he?"

Caddies on some of the richer golf courses near London, such as Coombe Hill and Walton Heath and Addington, must do nicely, thank you. Two of them—I know them both very well—play each other on a neighbouring course for £1! That is a great deal more than most golfers who have caddies will wager themselves. At these three courses you always give the caddy a tip of 2s. 6d. a round, and possibly a bit more if you win. On the Continent the caddy's tip is the only cheap thing about your visit. Five francs is all they expect or get. I have often seen an English caddy given £5 by a golfer who has just won a big competition.

Once I asked the hairdresser at the Ritz in Paris as to the biggest tip he had ever received for a shave. "Two thousand francs," was the reply. "Two thousand francs?" "Yes. A young American once gave me a thousand francs, and two

days later he came in, rather full of champagne, and asked me what you have just asked me—what was the biggest tip I have ever received. I told him—‘One thousand francs.’ ‘Nobody shall say that I don’t tip better than anybody else,’ he said, having forgotten that it was he who gave me the mille note. And he gave me two thousand.”

Baron Empain, so his friend Sir Charles Markham told me not long ago, gave a dance partner at a London night club £50 for just having two dances with him. But then Baron Empain is the richest man on the Continent, owning the Paris Underground Railway and half the electricity in France. Old man Rockefeller, by contrast, is famous for the fact that he never gives more than a dime as a tip.

Personally, there is only one tip in the whole wide world which I resent giving. And that is the compulsory 35 francs, very nearly 10s. at the present rate of exchange, which you have to give as a tip to the man who makes up your bed in a sleeping compartment on the French railways. Why on earth can’t the company pay their servants themselves? That is a question which a lot of us would like answered.

## CHAPTER V

### WHAT BULL-FIGHTERS EARN

ONE of the most curious developments of the past two years in England has been the extraordinary increase in the number of *aficionados* (Spanish for enthusiasts of bull-fighting) among the Upper Ten Thousand. Wherever I go I keep on meeting people who talk about bull-fights and bull-fighters. Literally, I know quite a number of peers, leading actresses, bankers, millionaires, as well as hundreds of undistinguished people, who can pronounce all the queer Spanish names of the various types of people who take part in a bull-fight (and I do not mean just matadors and picadors); who can tell you about veronicas and mulatazos; and who also claim to be personal friends with the various leading bull-fighters. Ernest Hemingway with his *Death in the Afternoon*—a brilliant, though long-winded and, to some people, sadistic book, started the craze.

I am not so silly or inexperienced in fan mail to go into the question of the cruelty to animals, both bulls and horses, which is said to be involved by bull-fighting. Personally, I have never been to a bull-fight and do not propose to do so, because I have a kind of feeling that if I went I would want to start some kind of a fight on my own. I have, however, been in touch with John Paget and his wife, who, as you may recall from the newspapers, have been in the bull-ring as professionals on various occasions last summer in Spain. It is from them that I acquired these facts and figures about bull-fighting.

In 1928 there were 312 bull-fights and 704 novillaras. The latter is a kind of junior bull-fighting event which bears the

same relation to a bull-fight as a touring revue at a one night's stand does to *Streamline* at the Hippodrome. In 1929 there were 300 bull-fights and nearly 1,000 novillaras. In 1932, the year of the Revolution, bull-fighting reached its depth with only 219 bull-fights. In 1934 the figure was over 300.

As may be expected, Madrid is the Mecca of all bull-fighters, and more of them are killed there because more are trying to capture a public following. For when it comes down to essentials, the difference between a good matador and a second-rater is all a question of lack of movement. The longer you hold your ground awaiting the onslaught of the bull, and the less you move when doing a veronica or a muletano, the more you are paid. There are all kinds of veronicas. I shall not go into this, except to say that this movement with the cape to divert the bull gets its name from the famous painting of St. Veronica holding up the towel to our Lord.

People may talk about the finer points of bull-fighting. The fact remains that the bull-fighter who has the greatest guts and allows for a smaller margin of error in avoiding with apparent nonchalance the horns of the bull is the fellow who gets the money.

After Madrid come Barcelona, Valencia, Seville, and Bilbao. In the next flight are Pamplona, Saragossa, and San Sebastian, where, though the audiences are good and consequently the pay for the matador is good, the public is extremely uncritical, and in consequence the matadors do not have to try at all to get applause.

The season of fighting is from March to the end of October. Then, during July, August, and September there is a bull-fight somewhere every day. For, in addition to the main centres I have mentioned, there is scarcely a hamlet in Spain which does not possess its own bull-ring.

In addition to Spain the figures for 1933 show that there were 70 bull-fights in Portugal and France (Bayonne being one

of the most popular centres). In addition, Mexico, Peru, Venezuela, and Colombia count for another 150. In Mexico they pay better money even than in Spain for a good bull-fighter. Belmonte, for example, will get as much as 50,000 pesetas for an afternoon's work. This in English money is something over £1,400. The other leading bull-fighters, if they go over there, get as much as £800 or £1,000. After Belmonte come Ortega, Barrera, La Serna (who was a medical student before he found this easier way of making money), Armillita, Lalando, Gallo, Nino de la Palma, Villalta, the Bienvenida Brothers, Colomo, and perhaps Cagancho, a green-eyed gipsy, who, in fact, is the only matador I have spent an evening with myself.

Let us begin with Belmonte. With the exception of Gallito, an old-timer, he is said to be the best bull-fighter there has ever been. The extraordinary thing about him is that he is barely 5 ft. 2 in. : he has one hip higher than the other, and has retired three times. Yet each time when he has come out of retirement he has been better than ever. Actually he is one of the few bull-fighters who has saved his money. Unfortunately for him he put it in land, and this has depreciated, which accounts for his coming out of retirement again last year. His object in so doing was to make 1,000,000 pesetas between June (for he appeared very late in the season) and October. I understand that he has made double that amount, which in English money is about £54,000. The reason why he is so particularly good is because during his retirement he had every opportunity of practising on the cattle from his own bull-breeding establishment, and was thus able to try out his skill in a way that no other matador could afford. He is forty-three years old.

Until his triumphant come-back, Ortega was the head man. In 1933, although the number of bull-fights was much fewer than before the Revolution, he fought sixty-nine times,

which was six times more than Barrera, and sixteen times more than La Serna, who in turn had eighteen more engagements than Lalando. Ortega has been paid as much as 25,000 pesetas for an afternoon's work, but on an average receives 15,000 pesetas.

Of the old stagers the richest are the now retired Guerita and Algaberno senior. Of the others, Barrera and Lalando would be easily rich enough to support a house in Park Lane and a big place in the country. On the other hand, Gallio, the brother of the greatest bull-fighter that ever lived, never seems to have a peseta, although he receives 10,000 each time he appears, and then goes on, when the season is over in Spain, to Mexico for double that amount. He has become the George Robey of bull-fighting. I do not mean financially, of course, because George is, I am sure, very well off, but the stories of how the promoters have to pay his fare to Mexico to fight, and then pay his fare back again to Spain, have made him rather a comic turn.

The expenses of the bull-fighter are fairly considerable. Far and away the largest—and this sounds funny to English people—are the bribes and tips he has to give to Spanish sporting writers to say kind words about him as a bull-fighter. There are in addition several little bull-fighting-fan periodicals to which he must contribute heavily. On top of this he has to have a big seven-seater car; a sword-handler who receives £2 each time the bull-fighter works; he has his elaborate costumes, which cost anything from £35 to £50 (he usually possesses three of these); his sword, which will probably last as long as he does and costs £20; his cloaks, which cost £5 each, but can only be used two or three times; his *muletas*—those red serge crescent-shaped bits of material which are so much part of his outfit and cost £2 apiece. Picadors receive varying payments. The head picador is paid £35 an afternoon. The other three receive £10, £7, and £6.

The number of hangers-on apart from the journalists is very considerable. There is no finesse about it at all. They have to receive *largesse* more or less publicly.

Belmonte always gets a guarantee of £600, on top of which he receives a high percentage of the gate. At a big bull-fight the prices of the seats are 45 pesetas at the ringside, grading down to 10 pesetas in the sun and 20 pesetas in the shade. So great is the popularity of bull-fighting, however, that despite the interest in football (which is almost as dangerous) a gate of 130,000 pesetas at first-class bull-fights, which is nearly £4,000, is considered very disappointing. Even at small bull-fights where the top price is 3 pesetas, £600 is a very normal gate.

The promoter's expenses are also heavy, particularly over the matter of the bulls. Half a dozen first-class bulls will cost anything from 15,000 to 17,000 pesetas—a matter of something between £400 and £500.

All told, there are 119 established breeds of fighting bulls and 56 others. The most famous are the Conde de la Corte. Next come the Muras, which have a public of their own. They are the most cunning bulls, and people who go to see them fight do so more from morbid curiosity than from a genuine interest in the finer points of bull-fighting. Third on the list are the Santa Colomos, which have been bred for centuries by the lineal descendants of Christopher Columbus, though very recently they have changed hands. Fourth on the list are the Verguas, which are the worst for picadors because for some inexplicable reason they go for the horses more than any other type. The horses, by the by, cost £2 10s. to £4 each, and it is pleasant to know that when it was announced in the English newspapers not long ago that many of them were old English hunters, a laugh went up all over Spain. There is not the slightest truth in this suggestion.

According to John Paget, who has fought bulls profession-

ally, there are two kinds of bull-fighting. One is a sport rather like hunting. The other is a big spectacle. He describes it as being "A ballet with a spice of danger," and "A trapeze act without the net." Actually during 1934 three star bull-fighters, headed by Ignacio Sanchez Mejias, were killed. This is about the average bag, together with eight or ten young fellows learning the trade at novillaras. Sanchez was killed very unfortunately, according to the experts. He was doing one of the simplest parts of the bull-fight. He was sitting on the step of the barrier passing the bull by him.

A bull-fighter from long experience knows which bull out of every hundred will go straight for him when he is by the barrier, as opposed to tossing his horns and passing on. It was the hundredth chance that got Ignacio. "Sheer bad luck," was the comment of all his colleagues.

But at least, though he had only just come out of retirement, he left his dependants better off than most English Cabinet Ministers could do.

## CHAPTER VI

### PRIVATE LIFE OF A FAMOUS FILM

I AM not in the habit of discussing the difficulties which attend the acquisition of information for essays which appear under my name. It is an old custom to pretend that everyone is only too pleased to tell you what you want to know. And, indeed, they usually are.

But I would like to emphasize the fact that no one has ever succeeded in discovering the fascinating figures behind a famous talkie picture—particularly one so historic as *The Private Life of Henry VIII*. Perhaps this is largely due to the fantastic wastage in so many films; but it shows that the London Film Productions Company, at any rate, has nothing to hide.

Most of you have seen the "Henry VIII" picture.

In the opinion of many, this film is epoch-making. Now, at last, Great Britain is beginning to exploit the unrivalled native resources which she possesses in tradition and historical background. The result was that *The Private Life of Henry VIII* swept the board throughout the United States in cinema takings. This, in the case of an English film, is as startling as if the Loch Ness Monster were caught on a bent pin.

But let us get down to facts. *The Private Life of Henry VIII* cost £59,000 to produce, and before it made a penny for the producers, another £21,000 in overhead charges, such as the Grosvenor Street offices, had to be accounted for. Within the first two months, in the United States alone, the preliminary cost of £80,000 was regained. In the very first week in the first cinema, the Radio Theatre in New York,

the takings were \$103,000, or £20,600. The world première was staged in a small cinema called the Lord Byron in Paris. This can hold only 450 people, and yet within eleven weeks, although it was played in a language foreign to the bulk of the population, it took 1,500,000 francs; and you know how comparatively few of those you get to the pound.

All told, the £80,000 spent one way and another earned, it is reckoned, at least £1,000,000 for the producers, renters, cinema proprietors and agents involved before the ultimate auditing of the last cinema's box-office receipts.

It is safe to say, and it unconsciously becomes my theme, that the film would have cost at least £150,000 to make in the United States, and even then it would have necessitated synthetic settings and artificial atmosphere instead of the original, historical background.

Where, in America, for example, would it be possible to find a Tudor mansion like Long Crendon, which was lent by its owner, an Equerry of the King, to Mr. Alexander Korda, the director of the film, for nothing? Where, too, could you find someone like the Marquess of Salisbury to lend a place like Hatfield House, also for nothing? Where in America is there any Royal palace like Hampton Court, which the authorities also lent for nothing? In this case it had to be vacated by nine o'clock in the morning each day before the usual sightseeing crowds turned up, but as it was in midsummer, the work could be started each morning shortly after four. Each of these places would have cost thousands of pounds to imitate, and then they would only have been imitations.

There is no doubt about it, the most interesting point about film finance in Great Britain is the fact that a good British film, particularly if it is historical, can be made one-third as cheaply as a Hollywood film of the same quality. For in Hollywood not only is there the question of the historical

settings to be made, but there are the heavy studio costs, the staff's contract, and executives' salaries.

Production methods are also much more inexpensive in this country. The scene of the marriage of Henry VIII and Jane Seymour cost £29. In Hollywood it might have cost £1,000 without gaining in artistic value. It will be remembered that the wedding is "shot" over the recumbent figure of a crusader through an arch down to the cathedral below. The arch and crusader were in this case plaster, set up in the gantry of the studio. The impressive cathedral was merely the empty studio below, with Henry and a few courtiers, choir boys, and so on walking across the floor. This trick of economy actually resulted in a far more artistic, dignified, and impressive effect than could have been obtained by the massed scene of courtiers, bishops, and crowds in an ornate Hollywood-Tudor cathedral.

But let us begin at the beginning with the scenario. Mr. Alexander Korda has Arthur Wimperis and Najos Biro under annual contract. Between them they wrote the story. Their proportion of salary which this picture has to carry is £2,500. The next item on the bill is £112 for special books on the period, for everything was done to make this picture historically accurate. The method of questioning in the Tower, for example, was historically correct.

Then come the experts on glass, history, costumes, furniture, and period dances. In the last-named case Mr. Espinosa assisted. Their total fee was £850. Next we have the art director and his staff, who made all the models from which the workmen made the sets. Their salary was £627.

The actual properties were valued at £20,000. Some of these were lent free by owners interested in the Tudor period; others were hired by the week. The normal payment in this case is  $7\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. of the total value for the first fortnight, and 5 per cent. thereafter. One item was the panelling.

This alone was valued at £7,000. The tapestries, which in normal times would be worth £10,000 and now would fetch about £3,000, were actually lent for nothing. Henry VIII's bed, on the other hand, which was an exact reproduction of the original, cost £87 to make. The banqueting-hall set cost £1,952. The execution scene cost £490, and in America would have reached a figure of at least £1,200.

The costumes, all of which had to be made because Mr. Korda was not satisfied with any of those offered him for hire, were made by the firm which dressed *Richard of Bordeaux*, and cost £2,054.

You will probably recall the kitchen scene. It was all real food, and, incidentally, real wine, and came from the Savoy Hotel. The chickens and pheasants, hares and rabbits alone cost £90, and were killed by the property manager as and when needed. All told, the food bill reached the figure of £280.

Then come the entertaining figures. The falcons flown by Henry VIII (incidentally under the expert guidance of Captain Knight) cost 40 guineas. The wolf-hounds cost a guinea a day each, with an extra guinea each day for the attendant.

You may remember the horses ridden by the courtiers and their long flowing tails. Nowadays horses' tails are docked, and there was great difficulty in securing what was wanted. What Mr. Korda had to do was to send someone to the slaughter houses and buy the tails of dead race-horses at 10s. a time ! He bought twelve in all.

The fighting cocks which appeared in the banqueting scene cost 8 guineas each. Another entertaining item is £63 for beer for the workmen, who often had to keep at it until 4 a.m. and badly needed refreshment.

One of the most important people when a film is starting is the make-up man. There were four of these in this film,

the chief of whom got £35 a week. Nor must one forget the wardrobe master, the property master, and their assistants. Their joint salary was £500. There is a clause in the contract of most film actors and film actresses that their salary shall not be divulged to the public, so I must not tell you what Charles Laughton was paid for the leading part. It is safe to say, however, that it ran into four figures. The extras and small part people totalled £2,509, and the complete artists' salary list amounted to approximately £12,000. The choir boys cost a guinea a time.

We now come to the studio overhead, which involves rent, upkeep, heating, and lighting. This totalled £6,513. Actually the Imperial Studios at Boreham Wood were those selected. The picture took eight weeks to shoot, which is very quick, but the preparation beforehand involved two or three months' work. I forgot to say that Charles Laughton, in addition to his flat salary, gets a small percentage on the profits of the film in the United States.

The sets cost £9,100 despite the loan of Hampton Court Palace, Hatfield House, and Long Crendon, while Mr. Alexander Korda's fee as director was £4,000.

We then come to music and orchestration, which amounted to £415, after which we are confronted with a figure of £4,500 for the technicians and cameramen. The cameramen, of whom there is one principal, two assistants, and a camera crew, are paid weekly. They received £1,000. The electricians received £900. The sound recorder and his assistants were paid £400. The production manager, who supervises all arrangements, and his department added together were paid £900. The editor and his cutting assistants received £700 between them. They were working on this film six weeks after the others.

One hundred thousand feet of raw film was used for the picture, the ultimate length being 8,000 ft. This item came

to £1,800. The developing and printing of the film cost £1,987, with another £75 for the titling. The electricity bill was exactly £500. The transport to and from the country houses, Hampton Court, and the headquarters in Grosvenor Street, amounted to £920. The "stills," the finest ever taken in England, came to £180.

I have said nothing about insurance. It is a tricky subject. Lloyd's do it, and naturally demand a very high premium. The health of the principal artists, the director, the technical chiefs, and the head cameraman, must be protected, and towards the end of the making of a film the risk is enormous. In a previous film Miss Wendy Barrie was ill for two days, and that cost a trifle over £2,000. I will only say that the insurance premium is a heavy item, running into four figures.

All told, as I have already said, *The Private Life of Henry VIII* cost £59,000 to make. At a conservative estimate the share of London Film Productions, who made it, will be £215,000. This means to say that the film cost £660 every minute it was shown, and it was coining money at the rate of £2,400 a minute.

This last figure, of course, is entirely exceptional. The picture was made by probably the most brilliant film director in this country, with England's most famous leading man in the star part, and it was made at the psychological moment when the whole world was becoming interested in the glamour of the past as portrayed historically on the screen.

## CHAPTER VII

### ROMANCE OF A FILM FIRM

THE rise of the Gaumont-British Picture Corporation from a staff of one man and an office boy in 1898 to a £20,000,000 concern with a staff of 16,000 and a monthly wage bill of nearly £500,000 is one of the greatest romances of modern times.

The original founder of the company which was the forerunner of the present mammoth corporation is still very much alive. Mr. Leon Gaumont is now in his seventies, and lives at Nice. He is very well off, unlike most inventors, and is quite philosophical. When he visited the new Gaumont-British studios at Lime Grove the commissioner announced his name to the secretary of one of the production executives. The secretary thought it was a joke. The commissioner protested. The secretary said, "Next, I suppose you are going to announce Mr. British." Actually, of course, it was Mr. Leon Gaumont himself. He laughed a lot.

Mr. Gaumont, to begin at the beginning, had a small photographic store in Paris in 1893. From this humble start he progressed until he was the world's first and most important film producer. He made animated pictures in California, in France, and—after he had started his London office in two rooms in Cecil Court, Charing Cross—in England. His original staff consisted of Colonel Bromhead and an office boy, who is now Mr. Tommy Welsh, managing director of Welsh-Pearson Limited. In those days America was very far behind in the film game. They used to send nearly all their negatives to be printed over here. They bought most of their pictures, too.

It was in 1902 that the first studio was opened. It was an out-of-doors affair on Freeman's cricket ground, Champion Hill, Dulwich, and the first director was Alfred Collins, then associated with Kate Carney. In those days they knew nothing about artificial light. A film cost about £5 to make and did not take more than a day, unless some accident occurred, as in *The Curfew Shall Not Ring To-night*. This picture took two days instead of one, because the heroine was rather an outsize in heroines. She had to seize the clapper of the giant bell which, with the two bits of painted scenery, constituted the entire lot, and unfortunately she pulled it down on top of her.

This film was perfectly serious drama, unlike *Lost a Leg of Mutton*, *Napoleon and the English Sailor*, which was the first film ever to have an exterior allocation (at Roedean), and *Naval Engagement*, which was a romantic comedy. I have in front of me a very early programme of the first continuous performance cinema which was opened by Gaumont at Bishops-gate in 1906. The programme consisted of the Olympic Games at Athens in 1906, the San Francisco earthquake, *Lost a Leg of Mutton*, and *Naval Engagement*, and lasted three-quarters of an hour. The Olympic Games film was the first news-reel scoop in the history of pictures, for Mr. Gaumont had arranged for an exclusive monopoly of the pictures and, indeed, he was the official movie-camera photographer to the King of Greece.

The first groping attempt to give speech to the screen began as early as 1902. The method employed was the synchronizing of gramophone discs with the pictures. If the operator failed, however, to put his needle down at exactly the right moment, the most deliciously grotesque results occurred. Known as chronophone outfits, they toured the provinces with considerable success, as well as appearing at the London Pavilion. Among the early stars were Harry

Lauder, George Robey, Clarice Mayne, and Ernie Mayne. Among their programmes were excerpts from the Gilbert and Sullivan operas, which, incidentally, have never since been seen on the screen.

Slowly the industry progressed. America was still far behind. The next stage in the development of the Gaumont Company was the introduction of an early attempt to secure natural colour films. You may possibly remember them. They were called chronchrome, and were quite popular in London and the provinces. The system was based on the simultaneous projection of three pictures through a coloured screen in green, red, and violet. In those days, of course, the cinema habit was still very much looked down upon and was largely left to the servant girl for her evening out. It is astonishing, to look forward for a moment, how times have changed and how to-day you are quite likely to find the Prince of Wales or the Duke and Duchess of York seated next to you.

It was in the year before the War that Mr. Gaumont decided to produce his own pictures on a much larger scale than before. He built a studio embodying every existing scientific and mechanical device at Lime Grove, near the film-printing factory which Colonel Bromhead, his London representative, had established the year before. In those days there were still three lime trees to justify its nomenclature. It was a glass affair and existed until two years ago. (Whereby hangs a tale. When the talkies came in with a sudden rush, it was necessary to make *High Treason* before the studio was completely sound-proof. Unfortunately, for years the glass roof had been a favourite rendezvous of the local sparrows, and the only way in which their twittering could be prevented from interfering with the more dramatic bits of dialogue was to shoot the picture between midnight and dawn.)

The business was still a very small affair, however, in pre-War days, although in 1914 a real full-length picture was made. This was *The Life of Richard Wagner*, with an elaborate musical setting provided by the London Symphony Orchestra under Landon Ronald. Until then the studio had been largely concerned with news reels, brief comedies, and absurd little "drammers." It may be of interest to recall that among the cameramen employed at that time was H. G. Wilkins, better known to-day as Sir Hubert Wilkins, the Polar explorer.

Unfortunately, war came to dislocate almost entirely the original Lime Grove studios. But the work went on, and it was from there that the first war film which ever showed an aeroplane fight was shot. The second film was directed by George Pearson and was called *Ultus, the Man from the Dead*. This was so successful that a whole series of *Ultus* pictures was made. In the year following the lighting effects were altered, but the Government took over the building and, though film production was permitted to continue in a haphazard way, the studio was chiefly used for research and propaganda purposes. It was largely because of this that America got such a flying start over Great Britain and was thus able to secure the best cinemas all over the world, as well as to improve cinema technique. At the time of the Armistice a screen version of H. G. Wells's *First Man in the Moon* was being made, and the company was using gas-filled lamps for the first time on a large scale.

So far the Gaumont Company was doing tolerably well, but the public had very little belief in the film industry as a form of safe investment. Thus it was that the brothers Ostrer came into the picture in every sense of the word. Originally stockbrokers and stockjobbers, they became an issuing house, and in 1922 they were approached by a firm of stockbrokers with the suggestion that their clients were interested in getting control of a certain film business owned

by foreigners. This suggestion had been made to a number of other issuing houses, who all turned it down, and who must have since that day kicked themselves till they were sore for missing a golden opportunity. The three brothers—Isidore, Mark, and Maurice—went into the business, bought out Mr. Gaumont (as the foreigner turned out to be), and formed the Gaumont Trust Company. The purchase price was in the neighbourhood of £250,000, and they gave Colonel Bromhead and his brother, Mr. Reginald Bromhead, half the shares and a long contract each. They themselves handled the big finance and left the details to the Bromheads. Thereafter the company became entirely British owned.

For the next five years the Ostrers were remote figures so far as the company was concerned, and did not interest themselves in the management. Then Isidore Ostrer, colloquially known as I. O., suddenly woke up to the fact that the United States had almost a stranglehold on the films over here, and realized that the only way to save the industry was to have control of every angle of the game—production, distribution, cinemas, and all the rest of it. He decided that the first step was to get control of theatres and then talk to the United States.

The first theatres he acquired were the Davis Circuit: the Marble Arch Pavilion, the Shepherd's Bush Pavilion, the Lavender Hill Pavilion, and the Shaftesbury Avenue Pavilion. Meantime he had amalgamated the W. & F. Films and Ideal Films. At the same time the Gaumont-British Picture Corporation came into being. There was an issue of £5,000,000 worth of  $4\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. First Mortgage Debentures at 98. Immediately afterwards another twenty-one theatres were acquired. In the following year still more were bought up, and to-day the corporation owns or controls 400 cinemas, which include the Provincial Cinematograph Trust which they acquired from Lord Beaverbrook—a deal finally fixed,

like so many others, at the Savoy Grill, at dinner time. It involved hundreds of thousands of pounds.

To-day the vast organization has its tentacles everywhere. It owns fifty dance-halls and a similar number of music-halls in this country ; it owns the Royal Hotel at Edinburgh and the Alhambra Music Hall in Paris. Altogether there are sixty-seven subsidiary companies which own cinemas, make pictures, distribute pictures, manufacture the machinery for talkies, make wireless receiving sets, and equip studios. In addition, I. O. some time ago acquired a block of 800,000 shares and a controlling interest in Baird Television on behalf of one of his companies. But the ownership of *The Sunday Referee* is a personal one. It belongs to I. O., although I believe he holds the shares in the name of his brother Maurice.

Apart from all these companies there are vast departments, such as that of catering, which need huge staffs. At the Gaumont Palace at Hammersmith the restaurant has a capacity of 1,000 people. There are food and drink to be supplied at the dance-halls from the Regent in Brighton to the Palace at Bradford, and still farther north. There is the Kitcat, the Tivoli Bar, the Capitol Grill, not to mention the two canteens which feed 600 people at the new studios at Lime Grove.

Roughly speaking, I. O. remains a mysterious figure in the background in charge of the finance ; Maurice Ostrer looks after the distributing companies and those which handle the by-products such as film recording and reproducing apparatus ; Mark Ostrer, who is chairman and joint managing director with Mr. C. M. Woolf, is chiefly concerned with the theatres and expenditure. Another brother, David, is in the Overseas Market Department, while Harry is in the studios.

There are two things which account for the incredible growth of Gaumont-British. The first, to be frank, is the quota. The quota, as you probably know, was the first

occasion on which a real tariff of increasing intensity was applied to foreign imports, and it has had a remarkable success. When it was first imposed, every cinema in this country was compelled to show at least  $7\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. of English films. This rate has risen progressively until to-day it stands at 20 per cent. and will soon go up to 25 per cent. if it hasn't done so already. The other thing was the determination of the Ostrer brothers to cease to be purely financiers and to interest themselves personally and full time in the growing spate of companies which they had brought into being or expanded. It is this personal supervision, together with the acute gift for looking into the future possessed by I. O., which has made the company the sixth largest industrial concern in Great Britain within four years of their taking control themselves.

Possibly the turning point in the Gaumont-British Corporation's finances occurred six years ago when I. O. went to the United States and, by a stroke of financial genius, persuaded the Fox Film Company to invest £4,000,000 for 49 per cent. of the Ostrers' controlling interest. On his return the Bromheads disagreed with the policy, and were bought out. That cost about £600,000.

So far I have sketched only the main outlines of this gigantic corporation. Consider the Director of Public Relations with his £10,000 a year sitting in Astor House, Aldwych, and his £1,000-a-year assistant. Consider, too, the publicity department at Lime Grove. Think of the subsidiary company which handles the £200,000-a-year advertising appropriation for pictures alone. Visualize the costumiers' department at the Lime Grove studios, and the hundreds of electricians, plasterers, carpenters, and the like. There is a permanent staff of 1,000 employees there, which is largely swollen when, as sometimes happens, no fewer than four pictures are made simultaneously there (another 400 people

are employed at the studios at Islington). Moreover, if you visit the studios, as I have done, it looks as though there are 2,000 or 3,000 employees at the very least. There are all kinds of people of whom you never think, the make-up men among them.

Actually there are seven "ace" directors—Alfred Hitchcock, Tim Whelan, Walter Forde, Victor Saville, Maurice Elvey, Tom Walls, and Sinclair Hill—working under the supervision of Michael Balcon, production chief to the corporation. More than £1,000,000 were spent on the studios, and millions more are going to be spent in the next few years on big productions which are likely to break into the American market. So far the guaranteed acceptance in America of Gaumont-British films is only six a year, although more than that are in fact taken. This may be considered, however, to be only the beginning of Big Business in the matter of the export of films to the United States. "We have raised more money from the investing public for the cinema industry than anybody else," said Mr. Maurice Ostrer to me. "The only thing that is missing at our studios now is a mint." As a matter of fact he is wrong. There is one aspect of the film business which Gaumont-British so far has not attempted, and that is a "Travelogue" department. At the moment it is left to the Americans to supply those entertaining travel features with amusing commentaries delivered, however, in strong nasal tones. Perhaps even this will be rectified, for the enterprise of Gaumont-British is proverbial. But their chief goal at the moment is some reduction of the entertainment tax. This was an emergency measure. The emergency has now passed, and yet the Gaumont-British Picture Corporation alone is paying the Government over £1,000,000 a year in entertainment tax.

## CHAPTER VIII

### CIRCUS MONEY

EVERYBODY who has a spark of humanity left in him is fond of the circus. We all love the smell of the sawdust, the jingle of the harness, the "hoop-la" of the acrobats, the ponderous movements of the elephants, the roars of the lions and tigers, the thrill of the flying trapezes, the crack of the ring-master's whip. Eagerly we pay our sixpences or five-and-ninepences to enjoy them again.

But do you ever think for a moment of the work, time, and money expended on these shows which have been gathered from all corners of the earth for your delectation? Well, willy nilly, I am now going to take you behind the scenes with me.

A summer tenting tour like that of Bertram Mills's circus, which begins at Easter and stays on the road for thirty consecutive weeks until October, involves an expenditure of no less than £100,000.

Of this, about £20,000 is "expenditure under contract." This means money which would become payable to artistes and others even if there were no tour. Artistes at Olympia, where there is so much seating accommodation, have earned as much as £500 a week. On the road the top salary is about £250.

The highest-paid individual circus turn is the man who dresses up like Charlie Chaplin in the Rivels's act. He has a guarantee of £275 a week all the year round. This, curiously, is exactly the salary received by the whole of the Long Tack Sam Chinese troupe.

That pretty German girl, Cilly Feindt, who does a high-school riding act, is paid £75 a week; the Flying Wallendas

receive £150; Barrette, that marvellous trapeze performer who dresses up as a girl, gets £175 a week.

In the case of the lion tamers, it depends on who owns the lions. Hagenbeck has half a dozen lion tamers who are paid £15 a week. Thus Togari, until last year, was an employee and received only £25 a week for his courage and skill. Since last year he has owned his own lions, to buy which he had to save up every spare penny, and to-day he receives £135 a week. On the other hand, he has to pay for their food and upkeep.

It is not possible to give an exact balance sheet of the circus, but the Millses had to take £2,600 a day at Olympia this season merely to break even, and in the tented show they must take £500 a day. In the tented circus there are no side-shows, though once they took Zaro Aga, the incredibly ancient Turk, with them with a guaranteed £50 a week. Actually he made £80 a week.

In the case of the sideshows at Olympia, the various showmen have to pay so much a square foot, but this is too complicated to work out, as it depends on frontages and diameters and positions, prominent or otherwise, at Olympia. Actually the rent they are charged does not pay the Millses in proportion to the total rent of Olympia. They have to do it, however, in order to prevent a great blank space round the circus itself. They would be only too pleased if they could hire half Olympia (just enough, in fact, for the circus) and not be financially responsible for the remainder. But enough of Olympia.

The capital invested in a summer tenting tour amounts to about £40,000. This includes the tents, seating, transport, general equipment, and about eighty horses, ponies, zebras, and mules.

The actual value of a trained wild animal act is worth anything from £3,000 to £10,000, according to the number

of animals and the quality of the act. By quality I mean the method of presentation and the showmanship of the trainer. A young lion or tiger untrained would sell at anything from £15 to £150, just as the price of horses varies. A Liberty horse costing £150 unbroken could not be bought for ten times that sum when he has become one of an act of twelve or sixteen—when his absence would mean the temporary break-up of the act and consequent loss of contracts until his place had been filled.

An elephant may be worth anything from £300 upwards, but Jeanette Power would not take £15,000 for any one of her four, because it would break up her act. Elephants live to a great age, as we all know, and although Jeanette's oldest one is sixty-five, she has no need to worry about any of her animals dying for another half-century or so. The first elephant ever to work in a circus in America is still on the job at the age of a hundred and thirty-seven.

Artistes' salaries cost a great deal when good programmes are presented. Eighteen or twenty acts at prices varying from £40 to £250 a week soon run away with a mint of money. Of course there are cheap performances—thousands of them all over the world—but they are cheap and nasty, and woe betide the man who tries to run a cheap show in Great Britain. He does not stay in one town very long. It is true that sometimes the same old cheap show has come back to a town some time later with a new name. But the public is not fooled as easily as all that. No, there have to be new shows with new artistes, new turns, and new everything; but where are they to come from? It is necessary to search Europe, America, and the world to find them, and all this costs money.

A four- or five-week trip to America to see perhaps half a dozen acts of which good reports have been received must cost four or five hundred pounds. Bertram Mills or one of

his sons must go to America at least once a year, and their countless journeys on the Continent all tell their tale in the balance sheets. In the last twelve years Bertram Mills alone has travelled nearly three hundred thousand miles in search of new attractions. Even when a suitable act has been found, there is the cost of getting them to England and then sending them home again. For circus acts insist on an each-way ticket.

Seven hundred pounds went very quickly when Tiebor's twelve sea-lions had to come from the Middle West of the United States and go back again. Hundreds more were spent in bringing the Long Tack Sam Chinese troupe from their native land; and Adèle Nelson's four elephants had to be transported all the way from New York to London and back. Even the bearded lady in the freak show who gets £15 a week insists on her second-class return ticket to Paris.

One of the troubles of running a circus is that you never really know the limit of your liabilities. When a few years ago Bertram Mills decided to bring over Truzzi and his sixty horses from Leningrad, he received word at the last minute that they were ice-bound in the harbour. It was necessary for him not only to spend £350 in getting ice-breakers to clear a passage to the open sea, but to charter a steamer to bring the horses over to England. Before that a great deal of time and money had been spent to obtain permission for Truzzi to leave Russia, for, though an Italian, he was in charge of the Russian State Circus and was completely under the thumb of the Soviet Government.

Feeding the animals is another expensive item. Eighty horses with the tenting circus consume £80 worth of forage per week, while four elephants can eat about £20 worth in the same period. Straw for bedding costs £12 a week; but Cyril Mills can recall a place where the ground was so wet that the circus used eighteen tons of straw in six days just to keep the horses out of the mud. In that same place they had

to put down just over a hundred and twenty tons of clinkers to keep the feet of the public dry—and you know what a few clinkers for your back garden will cost. Actually, twenty or thirty tons of clinkers in the front entrance is quite a usual occurrence.

Transport from town to town also means a heavy expenditure. Two special trains are used, and the bi-weekly railway account varies from £80 to £300, according to the distance covered. The circus moves at night. Stations and signal boxes have to be kept open while the traffic is handled. Meanwhile, tractors are delivering their loads to and from stations. There are thirty-five motor-lorries attached to the circus moving from one town to another by road. They consume a thousand gallons of petrol, costing about £60, in a few hours. Three Diesel engines generate electric current to light the circus, and they use two tons of Diesel oil each week.

Here is another serious item. There is a groom to every four horses, and twenty "ring boys" move the props between acts. Every lorry, of course, has a mate as well as a driver. There are twelve highly specialized tent men who are constantly engaged in their job. Ten men do nothing but clean up the ground, pick up waste paper and so forth. The show carries carpenters, painters, blacksmiths, mechanics, electricians, sign-writers, and even tailors and firemen. Between them they must be able to meet any emergency which may arise even at night or on a Sunday when shops and workshops are closed.

The administrative staff includes a general manager, an assistant manager, a box-office manager, a treasurer, as well as secretaries, typists, clerks, and book-keepers. In addition, there are the heads of the various skilled labour departments, bringing the total staff, exclusive of performers, up to two hundred. If there were only £700 in the treasury on Friday it would look bad for the wage bill.

Add to this staff of two hundred about seventy artists, and perhaps a dozen wives and children who do not take part in the performances, and the total personnel of the circus amounts to nearly three hundred. All of them have to be fed and housed in the towns visited and moved from point to point once or twice a week. Here, then, is an item in the railway account which can run to £50 for a comparatively short journey.

The rents of the ground occupied by the circus vary considerably, according to the position in relation to the town itself. No actual figure, therefore, can be given, but in many cases the rent charged for a week is equal to two or three times the yearly rental value.

Water is a serious problem. A supply must be laid on at every ground before the arrival of the circus. Whereas £10 will cover the cost of laying on the supply and the water consumed during a three-days' stay, there have been occasions when the supply had to be brought under the main highway and the cost of tearing up the road and making it good afterwards amounted to £70. The Mills family gets used to shocks like this.

Another time they had to buy two new water-carts, hire two draught horses and four men for a week, and the elephants alone saw to it that men, water-carts and beasts did a good day's work. That job cost £45, and when the Millses sold the water-carts back to the man from whom they were bought, they got only a quarter of what they had paid for them six days before. Naturally they had tried to hire the water-carts before buying them, but none were available "unless bought."

Another big item of expenditure is advertising. This runs away with £400 or £600 a week. This naturally varies with the towns visited, advertising positions in a town with thirty or forty thousand people being valued at about half the price charged in the big cities. Village advertising, which is cheap

and effective around towns with ten or twelve thousand people, cannot of course be undertaken when the circus is in a big city—all the effort having to be concentrated on the city itself.

The old saying that "Soap and water cost nothing" could not be further from the truth in the case of a circus. Brooms, rakes, sponges, leathers, and cleaning materials generally cost on an average £10 a week without labour. Paint as used "on the road" is almost a cleaning material. Constant touching up is necessary wherever bad grounds and rough weather are experienced.

The tenting shows spend about twenty weeks each year in winter quarters. During this period all animals have to be stabled, fed, groomed, and exercised. All motor vehicles, seating, and equipment have to be overhauled and repainted. Tents have to be repaired or renewed. On an average these twenty weeks cost in labour and material just over £12,000. This, based on a thirty weeks' tour, means an overhead charge of £400 a week. However, the seating and tents equipment are all new, or as good as new, and the whole outfit looks as bright with fresh paint and ready for the thirty weeks' hard work and hard travelling as ever.

At the back of all this expenditure is something more than a mania for "spit and polish." The equipment must be safe for the use of the public, and unless it is in good condition, it is not. Which brings us to the question of risks of insurance, and of premiums (that on the motor-lorries alone is £400), and so again to expenditure. In fact, everything you think of leads to expenditure. The last thing Bertram Mills thought of cost him the price of a fire-engine and six permanent firemen added to his staff. But his, I must admit, is the only circus so equipped.

In fact, there is only one item which does not seem so formidable as you would expect. Only £4 a week is spent on sawdust.

## CHAPTER IX

### PARIS FROCKS

IT is worth at least £60,000,000 a year to France that Paris should continue to be the centre of the world's fashions for women. This estimate, given me by an acknowledged expert, includes of course the manufacture of bags, scent, gloves, and shoes, not to mention fabrics. For supposing Paris lost her title her dress collections which open in January and August would cease to be the shop-window for Lyons, Grasse, and the other big centres which supply the dress-houses with their raw materials.

Altogether there are ten leading *couturières*, with another twenty close behind. It is these thirty who dictate the fashions for London, Berlin, New York, Buenos Aires, Rome, and Madrid, as well as for the rest of France. So as to cause no ill-feeling I will give their names alphabetically; they are: Chanel, Lanvin, Lelong, Mainbocher, Molyneux, Patou, Schiaparelli, Vionnet, Worth. You will doubtless be surprised at the omission of certain familiar names from this list. But there is some good reason for their absence. Several have gone by the board, while others have ceased to function through the death or retirement of their founder.

These ten all belong to the P.A.I.S.—the Protection Society of Artistic Industry so-called—and charge buyers 2,500 francs (£30 at the present rate of exchange) merely for admission to each of their collections unless they purchase at least that quantity of goods. This has been made necessary by the enormous increase in the pirating of the latest models—particularly by Germans, who copy them and manufacture

them and sell them to English firms within ten days of the opening of the collections. Unfortunately for the Paris dress-makers it is almost impossible to bring a successful action against these arrant thieves. They have only to alter a single button on an elaborate frock and they can claim it bears no resemblance to the original.

These ten houses each possess a staff of at least 500 employees. There will be anything from six to fifteen mannequins, who are paid between £5 and £10 a week. Two years ago some of them were paid as much as £600 a year. On an average there are also six head fitters whose salaries rise from £480 a year to £1,800 a year. Of the second fitters there are about a dozen. Their pay is on the same scale as the mannequins. There are seven head *vendeuses*. In some houses they receive no guarantee. In others, besides the normal 3 per cent. on all sales and 5 per cent. on those of customers whom they have introduced themselves, they receive a guarantee of £480 a year. It is certain that if a *vendeuse* cannot earn at least this amount she is not worth her place. There are also eight or nine second *vendeuses* who are really learning the job. They are given a purely nominal commission and about £2 a week. Nor must one forget the two *directrices des salons*, who are paid anything from £1,200 to £1,800 as well as a commission on clients whom they introduce. Finally, there are about 400 workgirls, who are divided into four grades. The little twelve-year-old apprentices get 15s. a week, the third hands receive 50s. a week, the second hands get £3 a week, while the head girls get £4 a week.

I have said nothing of accountants, secretaries, packers, the stock-room staff, or the people in charge of distribution. But the total amounts, as I say, to at least 500 in the case of these ten leading houses. The second-rank houses employ a staff of anything from 150 to 300. It is one of the comedies of

French law, by the way, that each establishment is entitled to 300 extra working hours a year. But it does not matter to the authorities whether the whole staff or a single girl is employed during those hours. In consequence, each firm tries to save up these extra hours for the frenzied fortnight following the spring and autumn and mid-season collections in order to deliver the models chosen by the buyers as soon as possible. If a collection has been a success, something like 900 frocks and tailor-mades, and what-have-you must be made in a little over ten days. But we are getting ahead too fast.

How is a collection put together? I asked Schiaparelli that. We were dining at her house just before her collection opened. I had asked her to dine out with me. But she said she was far too tired to go out. No wonder, poor dear. Thanks to some idiot in the Customs she only received her materials from Great Britain six days before her official opening. They had been sitting there for three weeks, and everyone was so scared of the Stavisky business that it was impossible to get action of any kind. Ordinarily it takes about three weeks to have the clothes made up.

"How is a collection made?" Schiaparelli repeated. "I wish I knew. I think it is the will of God. I can tell you this. Never believe people who tell you that the heads of the leading houses get together and decide what they are going to launch for the next season. Professionally we do not like each other. If we meet officially it is only to agree or disagree about the date of our openings and the cards for the buyers and fashion writers. If there is a certain new trend it is because we have all noticed something excellent and new which was not emphasized at the previous collections. But we all work differently." She poured me out a glass of very old Calvados. "With me it is the materials which cause the hardest work." She went on, "I love new fabrics, and I choose them at least six months ahead.

Always I work direct with the manufacturers—avoiding the middlemen.”

Having decided on her materials, Schiaparelli now asks her manufacturers to make several trials. Half of them are her own ideas and half are theirs. So the months “drip on,” to use her vivid phrase. Often it happens that a mistake in the pattern is seized upon and utilized. “I cannot tell you the complete disillusioning you have with the materials,” Schiaparelli will tell you. “Only two or three of the manufacturers really get as interested as you and want to work with you. When they do, it is grand. You see, all these trials are very expensive for them. And then comes the dyeing. I choose the colours I like and then I send them off. But oh, how often they come out so differently! It is quite a joke to find three navy blues or even two blacks which look alike after they have been dyed. It is worse with the silks even than it is with the wools. You never know how they are going to come out.”

In the matter of trimmings—ribbons, scarves, and so forth—Schiaparelli adopts the same method as she does with the line. She gives ideas and asks for ideas. From the combined results comes the ultimate trend. “Sometimes I ask for ideas,” she says, “and sometimes I accept them. But it is all very exhausting. Everything is delivered drippingly, and it is most difficult to co-ordinate something of which the elements are missing up to the last minute. Personally, I never show more than a hundred models at a collection. In my opinion it is the limit of what one designer can do. Three hundred are far too many. It means that the same idea is repeated seven or eight times. No human being exists who can produce nine hundred different models a year. One of the greatest strains of a *couturière* is to think up attractive names for her different creations.” Schiaparelli has dodged this simply enough. She merely gives numbers, and no

wonder, when bags, belts, gloves, and hats must all match, and sometimes, thanks to the dripping nature of their arrival, can only be put together to form the perfect ensemble a few hours before they are shown to the buyers of the world.

Of the buyers, far and away the most important in every way are the Americans. The principal buyers number about fifty, but there are at least another 150 with a strong purchasing power. You should see them at work. They criticize as hard as possible. They say the prices are too high. They say anything derogatory that they can think of. There are various reasons for this. First of all, they hope against hope to bring down the prices; secondly, they try to "kid" the other buyers that they themselves do not intend to return quietly next morning and buy up as many models as possible—the point being that if they can fool the others they will get some kind of monopoly of that particular show for themselves; thirdly, they are so tired that they can hardly see. The most important collections are always staged at the end of the ten days set aside for the Paris collections. The result is that the buyers have seen four collections a day for a week before they show up. They have, moreover, come over with the regular American idea of having a good time in Paris at all costs, and have gone to bed at all hours. So it is hell for them and everybody else.

And yet, despite their behaviour, the *couturière* can tell within five minutes whether her collection is going to be a success. She does not have to wait for the orders. There is a psychological something which I have noticed myself on the rare occasions on which I have attended a dress collection's "private view," so to speak, in Paris. Grumble the buyers never so loudly, and however much they fidget, they cannot conceal their inner feelings. Mind you, some of the buyers are charming. They will go up and tell the *couturière* how good they think it is. Others, often the English, are very

blunt, and say quite frankly that they are going to wait for the copyists (as I have said, these are usually Germans) for the bulk of their orders.

The most surprising part of the whole affair is that the leading Paris dress-houses are only too glad if they break even on the cost of their collections as a result of the purchases of the buyers. Naturally the cost of a collection depends very largely on the amount of expensive furs and fur trimmings shown. But on an average you can take it that £5,000 is the figure. So if the buyers purchase that amount, or even three-quarters that amount, of dresses, the proprietor is very happy.

In their order of importance after the Americans come the Italian buyers, followed by Spain, South America (once again), Germany, and, last of all, England. It appears that, despite all the talk of the success and popularity of American dress designers in the United States, there have been just as many buyers with just as much money, not to mention just as many copyists, who have come over from New York, Chicago, and Philadelphia this year. "The buyers," said Schiaparelli, "form the bridge between us and the public. They are very useful to us, particularly as they come over in January and February, which are the dead months for our private clientele. But don't imagine that we can exist on what they spend on us."

She laughed. "It is good that I still have my sense of humour. If one cannot make any money nowadays with France on the gold standard, at least I can have some fun with my collection—that is the main point. The reason why several well-known houses in Paris have failed recently is because their proprietors, like some journalists, started to take themselves too seriously. That is the greatest possible mistake. Don't you agree?" I did and I do. Indeed, I always have done so.

## CHAPTER X

### WHAT WOMEN EARN

IT has always seemed to me to be one of the injustices to women that they are paid on a so much smaller scale than men, with very few exceptions. Apart from the screen, the stage, and literature, one might take it as an average that women receive anything from two-thirds to one-third of what the men get for the same work. The reason for this, one presumes, is the completely out-of-date notion that women do not have to keep up a standard of life as high as that of men. Or else it may be that men are considered to have more expensive tastes, and so must be paid more, whereas women can economize.

Take the case of the butler and the parlourmaid. The butler is paid twice as much, and in many instances receives beer money on top of that. In the case of film stars, we have all heard of Constance Bennett and others being paid as much as £1,000 a week. In England the highest paid actress is Miss Gracie Fields, who is paid £800 per week on the music-hall stage. On top of that she will receive some thousands more each year out of gramophone records and wireless engagements, not to mention signing her name to advertisements of goods which she uses and appreciates.

In the case of film actresses in this country, probably Miss Cicely Courtneidge is as highly paid as anybody. Payment in films varies from the guinea-a-day "extra" up to several hundred pounds per week. The latter sums may be paid either weekly or per film made. It was announced some time ago that Miss Madeleine Carroll was to be paid something like £10,000 for two or three films.

In the world of literature there are half a dozen English authoresses who are paid as much as £750 as advance royalties on their books. I remember asking Lady Eleanor Smith whether it was true that she received £2,000 advance royalties for hers.

"For goodness' sake," she said, "do not say anything like that about me! On the other hand, there are several authoresses I know who are paid as much as that."

The highest paid woman journalist in the world is Miss Jane Grant. She is paid at the rate of 75 cents a word, which is something over 3s. a word in English money. She did the whole of the Lindbergh baby story for a New York newspaper; she also covered the Economic Conference. The highest paid woman reporter in England is Miss Margaret Lane, who receives £1,000 a year. That is an instance of what I was saying at the start of this chapter. If she were a man and were given so much space, she would be paid at least £2,000 a year. Among the feature writers in the newspaper world Jane Gordon is the most highly paid. Her remuneration works out at the rate of one guinea per 100 words.

There is no such thing, as far as I know, as a woman press photographer. There used to be one years ago, and she was paid £5 per week. There are, however, several clever women photographers, like Dorothy Wilding, Janet Jevons, and others, who own their own businesses, who employ staffs of as many as thirty to fifty people, and who must, in good times at any rate, make large sums of money.

It is a tradition in the art world that only men can paint pictures well, with the exception of Vigée Le Brun, Dame Laura Knight, and one or two others. There are, however, several successful women artists in England to-day, like Lady Queensberry, who are able to charge anything over a hundred guineas for a portrait. If they paint and sell a dozen in a

year, they are evidently adding very pleasantly to their husbands' income.

In the dressmaking world it is also a tradition that the men are at the top of the tree. In Paris the big designers are nearly all men. There are exceptions. Chanel, who started with a tiny hat shop and now controls one of the best scent businesses in the world, is reputed to make anything over £10,000 a year. In London, also, there are half a dozen dress designers of the first rank who must be able to make at least £2,000 a year after deducting all expenses.

In the world of commerce women are frequently underpaid. Probably the best jobs going are those of buyers for the big stores. In some instances they are paid as much as £2,000 a year, though the average is probably between £800 and £1,000. With the penny-in-the-pound commission, which is normal in many of the large stores, the average shop assistant is liable to earn about £2 10s. a week in the cheaper sections and as much as £6 or £7 a week in the departments where the higher-priced goods, like furs, jewellery, and evening dresses, are on sale. There are also superintendents who are paid about £5 or £6 a week. All they need is a knowledge of the routine of the store and a pleasant personality. They are, in fact, a kind of refined shopwalker.

Typists, as is generally known, are paid anything between £2 and £4 per week, except in the case of the confidential secretaries, where it may go up to as much as £500 or £600 a year.

Mannequins employed regularly in a large store will get £5 per week. In some of the smarter smaller shops they will probably only get £2 per week, except for the head girl. Some of them, however, who do free-lancing get a guinea a show and sometimes two guineas. Unfortunately for them, so many of the shows occur on the same day during the autumn or spring collections that they do not earn as

much as they might. On an average they are lucky if they make £300 a year. Some of them, of course, are able to supplement this by posing for photographs for advertisers who want pictures of pretty girls in silk stockings or motor-cars or powdering their noses. For this they usually get two guineas a sitting.

The world of athletics obviously does not provide any of the plum jobs which men can secure. There are very few professional women athletes. There is no such thing as a professional woman golfer, except for one case of the sister of a pro. Suzanne Lenglen is one of the very few professional women lawn-tennis players. I have no idea what she earns, but if you take into account her frequent appearances in the sports department of various big stores she must be doing very nicely. There are professional women swimmers who attempt to cross the Channel under their own steam. Their payment is curious. It depends largely on their success and whether they can say with truth that they used some particular form of meat extract while in training.

Women doctors are increasing rapidly in numbers, and where they specialize in children they are becoming able to build up quite good practices. Some of them, no doubt, earn as much as £1,000 to £1,500 a year. Unfortunately, very few men, and not many more women, prefer a woman doctor to a man. In the case of women surgeons the prejudice against them is even greater. The nursing profession is notoriously the worst paid in the country. After eleven years' work as a fully trained nurse a sister in a hospital will start at £75 a year, rising to £95 a year. If she becomes a matron she will get anything from £200 a year to about £500 a year. One or two famous surgeons have their own special nurses, and these are paid as much as fifteen guineas a week, but I do not suppose there are more than about twenty of them in the country.

One of the best-paid professions for women is that of the beauty-parlour girl, who, in a first-class shop, will earn from £7 to £15 a week. She may even aspire to be another "Arden" or "Rubinstein" and have her own business, with branches in Paris, New York, and Buenos Aires. In that event, of course, she will make several thousand pounds a year. Manicurists, on the other hand, if they make £3 10s. a week, including tips, are lucky.

Another class of women who earn money are the charity organizers. There are about eight or ten of them in London. Their usual fee is £100 and expenses for each charity. They may do anything from seven to a dozen a year. Two or three years ago, when there was such a craze for charity balls, charity matinées, and so on, one or two of them may have been making £1,500 or £2,000 a year. They certainly earned their money, however. The tact necessary to calm the social climber and to spur the dowager into doing her stuff must be nerve-racking.

Women teachers have had their exiguous salaries cut by 10 per cent. like the men, and in many cases are compelled to throw up their jobs when they get married. £200 a year would be a high average for their salaries.

Altogether, women are not well paid. Perhaps in a way this is just as well for those of them who are married; otherwise the inroad of the income-tax collector would be more savage than ever in view of the fact that married people are taxed on their joint earnings.

I have said nothing about marriage as a career for women, and yet, of course, it is still the best-paid job of all.

## CHAPTER XI

### “ROYAL AND ANCIENT”

GOLF is at once the oldest British outdoor game and the most popular. True, people used to play football even earlier than the fifteenth century, but from contemporary accounts it was more a licensed brawl than anything else. To-day there are at least 600,000 golfers in the country, and these numbers are increasing rapidly. Every year 9,000,000 golf balls are manufactured in Great Britain, together with 350,000 golf clubs. So rapid, however, has the increase in public interest been in the last twenty years that, to give an example, Mr. Francis Markes had seriously to consider in 1909 whether golf, as far as the Londoner was concerned, might not turn out to be a temporary craze, like roller-skating, before he formed his company and laid out Sandy Lodge.

This seems almost incredible to-day, unless you remember to what a very large extent the late Lord Balfour was responsible for introducing golf to the South. The number of leading English golf clubs which were founded before 1893 amounts to less than two dozen. To-day there are 2,000 courses in Great Britain, and their numbers are being increased every year. In order to attract the visitor, moreover, they are springing up all over the Continent. Already there are fifty in Germany, and they are to be found in Greece and Sicily and Hungary as well, not to mention France, Switzerland, Sweden, Spain, and Italy.

It would be difficult to say how much money is invested in golf and all its appurtenances, but it must run into several million pounds in England alone, and every year the game becomes more expensive, or so it seems, and more people

play it. Quite true that the 2s. 6d. ball has, with one exception, descended in price to 2s., and the drop in membership two years ago of the various clubs must average anything between thirty and sixty per club. But the municipal courses are growing more and more crowded, and every intelligent sports goods manufacturer annually thinks out new, entrancing, but expensive ways of separating us from our money.

At the present minute there are more than twenty-five different kinds of steel putters on the market, in addition to eight of the aluminium variety and four wooden ones and the brass ones. Golfers, it is true, are unusually eager to sample any new-fangled putter. They rush in their thousands to buy one exactly modelled on Bobby Jones's famous weapon, Calamity Jane, right down to the three bits of binding on the shaft—so faithful is the likeness.

That, of course, is why golf is so immensely popular and so utterly certain of extending its grip on the public every year. It is so full of life and full of developments, and even the decisions of the St. Andrews Committee, together with all the rules of golf, cannot cover anything like all the things that can happen to you in a round.

Other reasons for its certain increase in popularity are that, besides being an excellent medium of betting, it can be played all the year round, it takes one out into the fresh air, it can be played under any conditions except snow and fog. It affords endless opportunities for argument, boasting, querulity, and post-mortem discussions and, above all, it is the only ball game where you cannot interfere with your opponent's play, unless you lay him a stymie.

Golf needs no panegyrics from me, though. Nor need one waste time explaining that it is no longer an old man's game, if it ever was one. What is interesting, though, is to trace its development and its effect on people. It was only thirty-one years ago that the first £100 prize was offered to

golfers. This was at the Machrie Tournament. In 1931 the prize-money at the Southport Tournament was no less than £1,575.

As far as side bets are concerned, nothing, I suppose, has equalled the match between Lord Kennedy and Mr. Cruickshanks in 1868 for the freak bet of £500 a hole. But in 1926 the stake-money in a match between Hagen and Mitchell was £1,000, and in the boom years of 1928 and 1929 some very high wagers were played for—frequently by very bad players—at several courses near London. To-day caddies will tell you that it is rare for golfers to play for more than a fiver, but I have frequently played in four-ball matches where the other players have wagered £15 or £20 on the result. One cannot believe that this happened often before the War.

But then, everything has gone up in price, and golf can become nearly as expensive as polo. When you add together your club subscription, your conveyance to and from the golf course, your golf balls, occasional new clubs or new bag, your drinks, your meals at the club-house, your green fees on courses to which you do not belong, your caddies' fees and your caddies' tips, I am afraid that I, for one, must spend at least £150, and probably more, on golf each year. Many players reckon that they spend double that amount. Caddies, in particular, have gone up in price. Before the War 1s. a round was the top price, with a sixpenny tip on top of that. On the average fashionable course near London, most people nowadays give the caddy 10s. for the day.

Some golfers boast that they use the same ball for at least three rounds. Many more have a new one for each round. Golf is admittedly much more expensive near London than anywhere else in the country, but it is infinitely more costly everywhere than it used to be. I forget how much the average golf bag cost before the War, but the best ones were

not much more than 15s. To-day they can run up to something like £8, with all sorts of diverting zip fasteners and huge pockets for an extra pair of shoes. Even the number of clubs that people use has increased enormously. Before the War nine clubs were a distinct exception. To-day there are thousands of golfers who have fourteen in their bags, which may cost them as much as 30s. apiece for the irons and 35s. for the woods. These admittedly are top prices. But before the War few people paid more than 6s. or 7s. 6d. for a new one.

Then look at the other entrancing knick-knacks like the ball bags, woolly or leather tops for your wooden clubs, tee-peg containers and tee-pegs themselves. Tee-pegs are sold by the hundred thousand, although they were invented only six years ago or so. It is true that most good golfers have now reverted to ordinary grey flannel trousers in which to play, but thousands of golfers wear plus-fours purely for golf. Almost every golfer wears those leather jackets in the winter and special pull-overs in the summer. Before the War nobody bothered about his appearance at all. A nice loose jacket, the older the better, any old trousers, and a pair of strong nailed boots or shoes were all that you needed, unless you played on a course where a red jacket was necessary to scare off intruders.

Nobody wore golf gloves before the War, and whoever saw these gaudy golf umbrellas or waterproof suits, even ten years ago? Only a beginner used to buy a whole set of clubs at a time. To-day thousands of matched sets are sold, running from a No. 1 to a No. 9. Why, they even number the wooden clubs. Golf is getting so standardized that in a few years' time the fine old words like brassie, spoon, mashie, and niblick will have disappeared. Already the sammy, jigger, cleek, and baffy are dying out fast. It is just the same with the golf balls. The guttie killed the feather ball, but in the past thirty years it has died com-

pletely, as also have practically all the pre-War brands of ball, not to mention the bramble marking itself.

Do you remember the old White Colonel and the Whynot and the Midget Dimple, to name only a few? In some instances the firms which made these early successors of the Royal Haskell still manufacture golf balls, but if you go to any professional's shop or sports outfitter's you will find that golf balls, like golf clubs, have become standardized, and only six kinds of 2s. balls and five kinds of cheaper ball have a large sale, compared with the dozens of varieties before the War.

Yes, wherever you look you find that golf is changing. Courses are constructed quite differently from the way they were laid out in the old days. Cross-bunkers are going rapidly out of fashion. Many golf architects consider that you should be able to see the face of every bunker from the tee. "Blind" shots, where you cannot see where your ball is going, are condemned right and left. Now even Colonel Bogey is being attacked, and they want to abolish him for par. These changes are making golf more and more a game of pure skill instead of skill-cum-chance, and if they go on at the present rate there will be no such thing as "a rub of the green" at all.

Every year golf is becoming more and more a young man's game, whether you are an amateur or a professional. The standard rises every year. The strain and tension are greater. The courses are made more difficult, despite the extra length which can be got out of the new balls. It becomes more and more necessary to play down to your handicap if you are not going to be beaten handsomely.

Since the War, the most noticeable changes in this ever-changing game have been the switch over from wooden shafts to steel shafts and from sand to tee-pegs. Both developments were introduced from America. A few leading British

amateurs who had been touring the United States came back with the first of the steel shafts, but they would use them only for their wooden-headed clubs. Then a year and a half later, when the "cushion neck" was brought in, nearly everyone started to buy steel-shafted clubs of every description. The result was almost too swift to please the golf-club makers. There is a certain famous firm which has still got 175,000 wooden shafts in stock, the manager of which tells me that for every ninety-five people who buy steel-shafted clubs in the South, only five buy the hickory clubs.

In Scotland, the home of golf, where they view with suspicion anything which is new-fangled, the hickory shaft is still holding its own pretty well. But the rapid increase in orders from places like Glasgow and Edinburgh spells its early demise, unless, that is, Scotsmen learn what is perfectly true about steel-shafted clubs—that they will have more breakages with them than with the ordinary wooden shafts.

Down at Princes, Charman, the professional, told me that he sold eight steel-shafted clubs to every wooden one. That is rather an interesting point, by the way. The good golfer, and the medium golfer, buys his kit mostly from his club professional. It is usually the beginner or the person who is buying somebody a Christmas present who goes to the sports outfitter in the city. For some time professionals have been banding together to persuade members of golf clubs to support them by buying exclusively from them, instead of from shops. This campaign might have met with greater success if they had been honest enough to tell the members exactly what their salary or retainer was.

I have played golf for a quarter of a century—I was seven when I became a very junior member of the Royal St. David's Golf Club. But I had no idea what small fees they command from the clubs which employ them. The average player probably thinks as I did that the average retainer was any-

thing between £600 and £1,000 a year, at least for the top-notchers. It is nothing of the sort. Few of them get more than £6 a week. The majority get much less, and quite a number get nothing at all.

How, then, do they live? The answer is that they get an extremely handsome margin on every golf ball and golf club they sell. In the case of the 2s. ball, they make about 7½d. if they pay cash, and the same in proportion on the 1s. and the 1s. 3d. ball. They also do extremely well out of the sale of golf clubs, although they have less and less to do in the way of "finishing" them now that steel shafts are so popular. Even now, however, they will design special heads in the case of iron clubs, and must fashion the heads of wooden clubs from quite rough-looking lumps of wood. There is also the question of handles and, in the case of wooden shafts, the choice of a stick which will give the club a nice "feel" when the head has been fixed on to it.

It must not be supposed, though, that golf clubs are mean over the salaries they pay or do not pay. The upkeep of a course is tremendous. The average number of men employed all the year round on a good course cannot fall far below ten and will often be more. There is also the cost of re-turfing, seeding, and sanding. The cost of grass seed has gone up enormously and so has the cost of sand. To make a big golf course out of a farm, as was done at Sandy Lodge, is a very expensive business and, together with the erection of even an unpretentious club-house, would cost at least £25,000 to-day—an outlay which would have to be got back from members' subscriptions and green fees and bar receipts, and card money, before the real profits would start to roll in.

There are, incidentally, several different kinds of golf club. There is the proprietary club, belonging almost, if not entirely, to one man. There is the members' club, like Woking, which

is owned by the members themselves, and is run solely in their own interests and without any thoughts of profit. There is the club run as a hobby, sometimes at a loss, like Stoke Poges. There is the club run as the kernel of a housing scheme, like Moor Park, and there is the club run like any other company undertaking, by a syndicate. It is not for me to say which is the best. They all have their advantages. Perhaps the most interesting, though, is the club founded and run in order to increase the value of the neighbouring countryside for building land. The presence of a good golf course will quadruple this. Despite the slump all round, you still have to be very well off indeed to take a house near Sunningdale, while people with converted cottages at Sandwich can let them for anything from 18 to 25 guineas a week during the summer, although neither course is run for the purpose of increasing land values.

Another example of the financial importance of golf is furnished by Harlech in North Wales. Before the laying out of the Royal St. David's course, which is admittedly one of the best in Great Britain, the villagers lived on the meagre profits of their sheep and the wages earned in the distant slate-mines of Blaenau Festiniog. To-day, Harlech is a very prosperous little community. There are three or four hotels, including a first-class one, and any number of decent-sized houses whose owners took them purely because of the golf. The village children regularly earn 10s. or 15s. each carrying golf clubs for four or five months in the year, and so regular is their employment that one can say with truth that the Men of Harlech are all ex-caddies. Golf is at least as important to this community as the grouse moors are to certain parts of Scotland—and a good deal more lucrative. No wonder the birth-rate at Harlech is so high! A child, instead of being "a useless mouth," is a very good investment from the age of eight upwards, whether girl or boy.

I was saying just now that the wagers at golf are far less high than they were three years ago. On the other hand, the sweep-money in the annual tournaments of the smart social clubs of St. James's reach formidable proportions. Buck's, White's, the Bachelors', the Portland, and the Bath Club are cases in point where it is no unusual thing for the sweep-money to reach £700, and there have been cases where it has topped £1,500. Older golfers are inclined rather to disapprove of the extent to which money enters in tournaments like this, and occasionally rather ugly stories go the rounds when large sums of money are at stake. Needless to say, members of these clubs would never do anything dishonourable, but other clubs aping their example have not been so fortunate. There was the case of the young man who belonged to two golf clubs, at one of which he had not played since he took up the game and, in consequence, still had a handicap of 20. At the other he had been brought down to 6. Not long ago he resigned his membership at the latter course and, armed with his 20 handicap, he entered the tournament of his social club, which he won with the greatest of ease to the tune of several hundred pounds. Well, that is not pretty. Fortunately there is not much of this about, in the same way that golf has not been subjected so much as other games—at least in this country—to the efforts at making freak records. You will, however, find a number of strange feats recounted in *The Golfers' Handbook*.

Mr. H. H. Hilton and Mr. Percy Ashworth, many times racket champion, contested a driving match, the former driving a golf ball with a driver, and the latter a racket ball with a racket. Best distances: Against breeze—golfer, 182 yards; racket player, 125 yards. Down wind—golfer, 230 yards; racket player, 140 yards. Afterwards, Mr. Ashworth hit a golf ball with the racket and got a greater distance than

with the racket ball, but was still a long way behind the ball driven by Mr. Hilton.

In 1913, at Wellington, Shropshire, a match between a golfer and a fisherman casting a  $2\frac{1}{2}$ -oz. weight was played. The golfer, Mr. Rupert May, took 87; the fisherman, Mr. J. J. D. Mackinlay, required 102. The fisherman's difficulty was in his short casts. His longest cast, 105 yards, was within 12 yards of the world's record, held by a French angler, De-cautelle. When within a rod's length of a hole he ran the weight to the rod and dropped into the hole. Five times he broke his line, and was allowed another shot without penalty.

In December 1913, Mr. F. M. A. Webster, of the London Athletic Club, and Miss Dora Roberts, with javelins, played a match with Harry Vardon and Mrs. Gordon Robertson, who used the regulation clubs and golf balls. The golfers conceded two-thirds in the matter of distance, and then won by 5 up and 4 to play in a contest of 18 holes. The javelin throwers had a mark of 2 ft. square in which to "hole out," while the golfers had to get their ball into the ordinary golf-hole. Mr. Webster's best throw was one of 160 ft.

In 1912, Mr. Harry Dearth, attired in a complete suit of heavy armour, played a match at Bushey Hall. He was beaten by 2 and 1.

In 1914, at the start of the Great War, Mr. J. N. Farrar, a native of Hoylake and now professional at Athens, was stationed at Royston, Herts. A bet was made of 10 to 1 that he would not go round Royston under 100 strokes, equipped in full field kit, water-bottle, and haversack. Farrar went round in 94.

It is noticeable that all these freak matches, and many others besides, all occurred before the War, when the game was still treated as a medium for stunts by many people. To-day it is regarded at its true worth, from the point of view of sport, health, and finance.

## CHAPTER XII

### £ s. d. OF THE ICE RINK

I HAVE often thought that, if I wanted to make money, I would make a comprehensive tour of America and then try to introduce into this country some of its latest ideas of entertainment. Anything from Corinthian bagatelle to ice hockey and (four or five years ago) midget golf has had a big vogue in the United States long before it has reached this country. In the case of ice hockey, and, consequently, ice skating, America has had the "bulge" on us for some years. With the exception of a portable ice rink in the basement of the Albert Hall, which was followed by a tiny ice rink over a garage in Hertford Street, there was no post-War ice-skating rink in this country of any pretensions before 1926. In that year Mr. Stephen Courtauld discussed the position over dinner one night with Mr. Walter Keigwin, and the London Ice Club resulted in consequence. That was ten years ago. To-day more than £1,000,000 has been sunk in ice rinks.

At the moment there are probably half a million people skating every week on the ice. That is a big advance on the past, particularly when one realizes that even before the War, when somehow winters were colder and skating was more likely to have a vogue, there was only Prince's, sponsored by the Duchess of Bedford and, still earlier, that ice rink in Petty France which is now a garage.

The progress and expansion of ice skating on artificial rinks are a duplication on a small scale of greyhound racing. Even now there is only a limited number of rinks in this country, each of which, however, attracts at least 3,000 people

a week—a figure which is doubled during the cold-weather spell. Mr. Walter Keigwin had no experience whatever of ice-rink manufacture until he decided to look into the question of building the London Ice Club. True, he had represented England against Switzerland before the War, but that was all he knew about it. Under his control, ice rinks have become an integral part of public entertainment, and with the introduction of Canadian teams ice hockey is likely to become one of the most popular public spectacles in the country.

The figure of £1,000,000 which has been given to me as being locked up in the industry of ice skating does not involve the several thousands made annually by the manufacture of skating boots and other accessories. There are four different kinds of skates now on the market. There is the English style skate, which is rather low on the ice. There is the Continental style, which is higher and enables strong edges to be taken and small turns to be made. There is the speed skate, which is a long, low affair with a very thin bed. And finally there is the ice-hockey skate, which is made as light as possible and has aluminium mountings.

Ice hockey is becoming one of the biggest draws in the country. Each of the fifteen rinks now in existence has one or two teams playing regular league matches. And where they used to get twenty or thirty spectators to watch, there are now several hundreds. One might think that, enormous as is the increase in the manufacture of skates, it would be still more spectacular in view of the growing fascination for skating. And yet every little ironmonger in the country used to keep skates, and has always kept skates, and the number sold whenever a sharp frost occurred was fantastic. Almost every boy in the country has a pair. But there is no doubt about it, the sale of good skates has gone up out of all proportion since the introduction of these ice rinks.

Another way in which industry in this country has been

assisted is in the manufacture of skating boots. An individual rink often hires out 600 pairs of skates and boots a week, and as these last only two seasons it means that the manufacturers are being kept very busy.

Natural ice is at least four times as bumpy as the artificial variety. To-day the artificial making of ice is a highly scientific affair, and it is possible to make it either fast or slow as you require.

On the artificial rinks the professionals earn a remarkable amount of money. I am told that far and away the best method of earning a living without undue effort at the moment is to be a professional ice-rink gigolo. Although they receive no retainer from the ice rinks where they are engaged, they get a sufficiently high commission on the profits of the lessons they give that they make a very good living out of it. There are, in fact, dozens of skating professionals—most of them foreigners, incidentally—who earn a minimum of £15 a week, an average of £25 a week, and a maximum of as much as £40 a week for at least six months in the year. Nor do you have to be so good as all that to be a professional. It is one of the curiosities of ice skating that the good amateurs are always better than the professionals. The two world's champions are Sonja Henie and Fritzie Berger. Both are amateurs. Of the English champions, the best is probably Mrs. Marian Field, who was formerly Miss Marian Laye. Like her stage namesake, she is blonde and very pretty. Her husband is the son of a dentist. There are also the two Misses Shaw, of Manchester.

One of the reasons for the popularity of ice skating is that it provides enough exercise to keep any woman and every man over forty perfectly fit if two hours a week of it are indulged in. Ice skating is very exhilarating. It is a great tonic, and gives you far more exercise than you think, particularly when you try to get up after falling down.

“Personally, I know nothing about skating. I have only provided the rinks,” said Mr. Walter Keigwin. “We rink managers have rather been ‘had,’ because we have been encouraged to spend far too much money on these ice rinks. The only method of success with regard to ice-rink promotion is to convert existing dance-halls into suitable premises for skating. This costs only £10,000 or £12,000 instead of the £80,000 or £100,000 it costs to build a complete building. There have been various failures in the promotion of ice rinks, but this has been due to under-capitalization, faulty management, and the spending of too much money on the original building. Ice skating will never take the place of dancing. A young man likes to cuddle his girl. This he cannot do on the ice, exhilarating though skating on the ice may be.

“I have been approached to build rinks in Paris and in Nice, though it is doubtful whether anything will come of it. In this country the National Skating Association, of which Lord Doneraile is the chairman, is the most important body. One cannot say too much about this. Nor must one fail to emphasize the importance of our bringing over from Canada those crack ice-hockey teams like the Edmonton Superior (what a name !). This is being done by the Ice Rinks Managers Association for the purpose of popularizing ice hockey and therefore ice skating. It cost us about £2,000, but, in fact, I should hate to tell you how big a profit on that original outlay we have made. I myself do not play ice hockey. I am far too quick-tempered.”

The great question now is—How long will the craze for ice skating last? In the course of the last fifty years there has been a series of cycles of ice-skating popularity. Old stagers will remember not only Prince’s, but Hengler’s and the Niagara, and the Aquarium and other places. Optimists say that for permanent support even a great city like London

cannot maintain more than a couple of ice rinks, but this remains to be seen. All the time more and more people are learning to skate on the ice, and every day the standard is improving fast. As a case in point, a little girl eight years old the other day became a silver medallist, thus passing a test which a few years ago proved too much for most grown-up experts. What is more, Miss Megan Taylor became woman champion of Great Britain when she was eleven.

Speed in particular has greatly increased, and every kind of jump and spin is now practised. A few years ago anybody who could do the Teapot spin, for example, was always sure of a circle of admirers. To-day it is considered most ordinary. This also applies to the Counter Cross spin, the Back Loop jump, the Salchow jump, and the Axel Polsen jump. As for waltzing on the ice, it was not so long ago when only one couple in sixty could do it with any attempt at poise. To-day the majority of skaters do it quite unself-consciously.

I have already referred to the high fees earned by skating instructors attached to individual rinks. Others who are, so to speak, free-lances earn as much as £50 and £60 a week from October to April, charging 10s. for a half-hour's lesson.

To end on a Royal note, the latest pupil of Marples, one of the professionals of the Park Lane Ice Club, is Princess Elizabeth. This alone will guarantee a continuance of patronage among children whose parents like to follow the Royal example. But it is hard to visualize how ice-rink managers can succeed in cutting their costs and thus keep ice skating popular. At the present moment I am told that the average cost of running an ice rink is between £200 and £300 a week. If this high figure cannot be clipped somewhat 'it looks as though the present skating craze, which began six years ago, will be unable to maintain itself against its rival modern allurements.

## CHAPTER XIII

### RUSH HOUR AT LE TOUQUET

NOWHERE else and at no other time is the high speed restlessness of the *de luxe* world better illustrated than at Le Touquet at Easter. An example of this is provided by the arrival at 6.30 p.m. on Good Friday at the Hotel Picardy of over 200 guests in the course of twenty minutes, and their departure in the course of a quarter of an hour on Easter Monday. If you allow only one minute per guest for the baggage men to put the trunks and suitcases on the motor-cars and hotel omnibuses, it would mean that the last guest would be four hours late for the last Channel steamer to leave Boulogne that evening.

Another example of the rush was afforded at the same hotel by the arrival of 928 people for *thé dansant* on an Easter Sunday. They arrived between 4.30 and 5 o'clock and left *en masse* at 7 o'clock. No wonder Joseph Wibbels, the manager of the hotel, was still mopping his forehead when I came in from the golf course at 8 p.m., even though he himself naturally did not have to do any of the actual fetching and carrying.

Which brings us to the strain exerted on the golf-club secretary. Over 600 people played golf each day from Friday to Monday at Le Touquet, and 400 caddies had to be provided to cope with the demand—each caddy, moreover, having to be shod with bedroom slippers in order that he should not spoil the greens.

One more example is afforded by the Casino, where no less than £50,000 was cashed in cheques of £50 or less during the week-end. Imagine the business of "vetting" visitor

after visitor and putting in trunk call after trunk call to the English banks to make sure that their credit was good. Light-hearted gamblers imagine that if they overdraw their accounts while they are abroad no one will be any the wiser because they will be back again before their cheques are passed through. That is where they are wrong. On the Thursday evening the Casino authorities knew already that they had cashed three stumer cheques that day.

But let us probe into the whole matter of providing *de luxe* visitors with the luxury that they crave for a mere weekend. Hotels open like mushrooms overnight, remain frenziedly gay for five days, and then shut down again. It never occurs to us to ask the how and the wherefore. We say, "Well, it is up to them. We pay, they provide." Now come behind the scenes of the Picardy. It is just one of the six big hotels which open at Easter at Le Touquet and close again until Whitsun. I choose it partly because I stayed there myself and so found the manager easily accessible, and partly because it is the largest and probably the most luxurious hotel on the Continent. The manager is a Westphalian, but when Le Touquet is quiet he is manager of the Hôtel Chambord in Paris. "It would be impossible to open the hotel at a cost of less than 750,000 or 800,000 francs," he will tell you, "and that is between £9,000 and £10,000. And we remain open for only a week, of which only three days are really important. Incidentally the *tronc* on Easter Sunday alone will have amounted to about 28,000 francs.

"For the opening of the hotel we have to collect a staff of 302, apart from the sixty plumbers, electricians, night watchmen, and others who have to stay behind to keep the hotel in good repair through the winter. Fortunately, this hotel is one of a group of nineteen hotels with the head one in Paris. We transfer about 150 of our best men to Le Touquet for Easter. The remainder are recommended to us

by colleagues in the hotel business. You cannot imagine what a business it is to check their papers, which include details of their age, mother, father, former positions, and testimonials. We have to be sure that they are allowed to work in France. We must be still more sure that they are entirely honest. I myself arrived a fortnight before the opening, and with me came my head chef, restaurant manager, and the other key men. Two days before the opening we had a grand rehearsal of everything—from the preparation of a banquet to ringing the telephones in the various bedrooms.

"On Thursday 40 guests arrived; on Friday came 250; on Saturday 300; and on Sunday about 60. There are actually 664 guests here. Over 400 will have gone by Monday, and all except a dozen or so by Tuesday night. When you have all gone I collect all my head men and we go through every detail of the week. Each of us has taken notes about everything—the speed of service at tea-time, the efficiency of the baggage men, the cashing of the cheques—with the idea of rectifying any mistakes and making every possible improvement by Whitsun when we reopen.

"How much sleep will I have had in the week? Oh, about twenty hours all told, if I am lucky." As he spoke, the head of the *caisse* came in and whispered. Monsieur Wibbels nodded permission. "A certain guest wants to cash another cheque. That will make 40,000 francs he has had," he explained. "Oh well, it is all in the day's work."

Now come to the Casino and meet M. Ranz and M. Aboudaram, the head of the syndicate which controls it. "Oh, it took us only two days to reopen the Casino," says M. Aboudaram. "We have a staff of 400, and we leave everything ready to be reopened at the end of the previous season. We have sixty croupiers and sixty changeurs. The croupiers earn nowadays about 150 francs—nearly £2 a day. They used to get more. They have very long hours—from 2

o'clock in the afternoon until 6 o'clock or even 9 o'clock in the morning. They work for eight months in the year. For the rest of the time many of them employ themselves as carpenters or painters or builders."

"Where did we get our croupiers for the roulette tables?" inquires M. Ranz. "Oh, that is not difficult. There are schools of roulette croupiers in Ostende, San Remo, and Monte Carlo. We get all the men we want. Besides, one or two of the staff in the boule rooms have been expert croupiers in Monte Carlo. What we must not forget, though, is that all croupiers must be French. They cannot be Italian, Belgian, or Monégasques.

"How much money have we taken? I cannot say yet. But it is six times as much as at Easter last year."

Now come to the long bar of the Casino where Georges, the head barman, has thirteen assistants. On Sunday night he was not able to go to bed at all. Champagne cocktails, martinis, all kinds of drink were demanded by thirsty gamblers until 9 o'clock in the morning, when the numerous survivors of the final tables ate eggs and bacon and drank coffee. He snatched two hours' sleep between 12 and 2 o'clock. That was his ration after three hours' sleep the previous night and four hours' sleep on Friday. But look at the golden results. In five nights the bar took about £700. It would probably have taken more if the management did not see to it that the great curtains of the Casino were drawn to let in the sunshine at 8 a.m. This invariably results in an immediate exodus of the vast majority of the gamblers.

I have already explained how the secretary of the golf club has to round up 400 caddies from the neighbouring hamlets to cope with the rush. A golf course, however, has to be in working order all the year round, and as there are always twenty-six people at work on it there is no frantic last-minute energy. Allowing for the fact that more than 600 people

played each day of the actual week-end, one can assess the green fees at something between £1,500 and £2,000.

There is no space to describe the rush in Paris Plage of the cafés like the Centrale and the Normandie. Yet they were crowded all the time. As for the shops in this spick-and-span little town, they open and then close like petals in the rain. Many of them were caught napping last year. They had no idea that there would be such an avalanche of visitors.

And what is it that makes Le Touquet act as such a magnet on the "high-lifers"? The answer is simple. Le Touquet provides you with the cream of indoor luxury and outdoor sport. The new golf course—I have no hesitation in saying it, and I am borne out by several leading golfers—is now one of the first three or four in the world. Cyril Tolley helped to plan it. The hazards are enormous. The turf is springy. Its only rival in my affections is Portmarnock. It is a Grand National of a golf links, and many people think that if there was such a thing as a Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Gamblers its first action would be to forbid the laying out of so magnificently exhausting a course so near a casino like this one at Le Touquet.

In addition, you have acres of hard tennis-courts, miles of pine woods through which you can ride on excellent hacks. Finally, you meet all your friends there, and they, like yourself, feel there is something champagne-like in the air which makes them forget all their inhibitions the minute they arrive. And what could be fairer than that, especially when it is made so easy for them to lose all their money in the Casino?

## CHAPTER XIV

### THE MAGNET OF MONTE CARLO

LIFE is a funny business. Six times I have been to Monte Carlo, and on each occasion I tried hard to get in touch with René Léon, the presiding genius of the Anonymous Society of Sea Water Baths (in other words, the Casino). And each time he proved too elusive even for me. Then one of Les Girls at the Dorchester told me he had been to see their floor show the previous evening. And within twenty-four hours I achieved this seven-year-old ambition of meeting the redoubtable René face to face, and, better still, of persuading him to talk about Monte Carlo. There seems to be nothing now that I do not know about systems, suicides, croupiers, "breaking the bank," and trente-et-quarante.

René Léon is about fifty years old, with a bright brown eye, an almost bald head, a smile rather like Michael Arlen's, beautiful hands, a soft voice, and a great deal of charm. He is about 5 ft. 6 in. in height and an early riser.

René Léon had given a very large order for gold *jetons* to the French Mint. Unfortunately, he was told there would be a delay of four and a half months before delivery. This did not upset the wizard of Monte Carlo. He immediately bought up the whole "float" of American gold dollars in France and as many more as he could have sent by air from England. All told he had now acquired ten million francs' worth of five-dollar, ten-dollar, and twenty-dollar gold coins. But as a roulette table can easily lose a million francs a day (a charming little statistic) he has only three tables at which you can play and be paid in gold.

This subject of the rate at which tables win and lose is fascinating. According to René Léon, each of the sixty-five roulette tables, though only a percentage of them are in play at any given period, has a turnover of thirty million francs (£360,000) a year. If you work out this sum you get a figure of over twenty-three million pounds being wagered on the roulette tables alone. I say nothing of the trente-et-quarante, chemin-de-fer, and baccara tables. More fascinating still, each of the sixty-five tables has a pedigree like a racehorse, giving the total profit or loss for each preceding year. And the joyous thing is that, despite the use of a spirit-level three times a day, which has to be accurate to within a millimetre, there are six tables which show a loss to the Casino year after year. All the croupiers want to roll the ball there because naturally they have many more occasions on which to say, "*Merci, monsieur, pour le personnel,*" when the gamblers are winning.

What are the lucky tables' numbers? René Léon refused to tell me in London, but promised to point them out to me for my own private information and necessary action on my next visit to Monte Carlo. These tables lose as much as six hundred thousand francs a year compared with an average profit of a million francs a year shown by the others. One particular table which used to stand in the *salon des lectures* lost over a million francs every year for three years until it was removed.

Why does the Casino not remove the other six? The answer is that in every steak, kidney, and oyster pudding there is always one oyster, if you can find it. In this case, as I say, there are six. Nobody is able to explain the mystery. The spirit-level report has to be signed three times a day by three responsible officials to say that the drop of liquid is exactly in the centre. If it is not, at first, thanks to atmospheric changes, the table-legs are altered by hydraulic pumps

until they are exactly level. But still those six tables lose. I can tell you this, however, they are all in the "kitchen," as opposed to the *salles privées* and the Sporting Club.

As most of you realize, there is no such thing as breaking the bank at Monte Carlo. There are always six million francs available to draw upon in the Casino and another twenty-four millions as a permanent float in the bank. It is quite easy, though, to "break" a table. Each is supplied in the morning with a sum of two hundred thousand francs. Admittedly, when this amount runs low one of the staff goes off to *ajouter* it with a few more thousands. But a lucky gambler playing in maximums can easily clean up the £2,400 to produce this result. Lady B—— did it six times in one afternoon. The worst week the Casino ever had was in 1926, when in seven days' play it lost exactly seven million francs. Yet this is not really surprising. To René Léon, who holds high mathematical degrees in France and has made calculations and systems his especial hobby, there is no confine to the law of average. The Casino may win for 400 years in succession and lose for the next 400 years. His statistical department has delved into every known and unknown system with this result. It has discovered that if anybody with a hundred thousand francs capital cares to put in eight hours a day playing the *Montant d'Alembert* system in small stakes, he is absolutely bound to make four thousand francs profit a year. But that is only 4 per cent., and who would care to undergo this penal servitude for so small a reward? There are, of course, any number of regulars who live at Monte Carlo and Nice on a small certain profit of a few francs every day. They come on the 10 a.m. and the 10.20 a.m. trains from Nice all the year round. They were there, about 180 of them, on Christmas Day (as on every other day) of 1929. I was on my honeymoon at the time and I saw them myself.

The advantage of a system is that it prevents your losing your head and plunging, because it automatically sets certain limits on your stakes. The disadvantage is that it may involve a mounting series of stakes which carries you beyond the maximum, if not beyond your capital, before you can break even again.

Altogether there are 620 croupiers in Monte Carlo. Many of them are the third and even fourth generation of the original German croupiers brought from Homburg to Monte Carlo by François Blanc in 1867. To be a croupier in Monte Carlo is equivalent to being in the Home Office in London. The young croupier starts to earn £360 a year, rising to £600, unless he becomes *chef des jeux*, when he receives just under £1,000 a year.

"Let me say at once," said René Léon, "that it is impossible for a croupier to roll the ball into any particular hole. The metal lozenges and the rebounding make this impossible, which is very fortunate for the Casino. After all, the croupier wants to please the gambler and get a tip from him. So if he could oblige he would." This is interesting, if only because of the elaborate care taken by so many gamblers not to put on their stake until the ball is already spinning round the wheel.

"My total staff amounts to 4,000 people," he went on. "We have our own gasworks, waterworks, road-making department, tobacco sellers, and post office. In 1867 there were only two people in the last department. To-day there are forty-five. Thanks to the Casino the Monégasques, of whom there are 2,200, have no taxes and get their gas at eighteen centimes a unit instead of sixty-three centimes. The Casino stands the racket of the remaining forty-five. The Casino, indeed, pays Monaco 8 per cent. of its profit every year. All told, there are 104,000 shares in the Casino, though some are divided up into as many as five parts. Sir

Basil Zaharoff used to own 10,000 of them, but he has since parted with them.

"By the way, Sir Basil is not mysterious at all. He is a very nice, kind, old man who suffers from gout, enjoys the sunshine, refuses to talk business, and lives with his daughter and granddaughter.

"It is interesting that so few shareholders are English. Most of them are French or American. It may interest them to know that if the Casino ceased operations to-morrow and sold its sites at 50 per cent. of the current value of the surrounding property the shares could be redeemed at a premium by the liquidators. For, in addition to the Casino and the Sporting Club, we own the Hôtel de Paris, the Hôtel Hermitage, the Café de Paris, the Country Club, the Mont Agel Golf Course, and a great many other properties."

Of this possibility of liquidation, however, there is not the slightest fear. René Léon is confident that the very high taxes demanded by the French authorities from the French casinos will prevent their proving such a gold mine as is at present expected. Besides, he is sure that the great security in which the public can gamble at Monte Carlo will always prove a lure even if there are intervening casinos between Monaco and Cherbourg or Calais. "Here in Monte Carlo," he said, "we run our gambling as strictly as if it were a Red Cross Hospital. I will not discuss the morality of gambling. No doubt it is much healthier for people to go on cruises. But if people insist on gambling—well, we protect them as far as possible from crooks. We have a black-list of more than two thousand people who have been caught trying to cheat. And none of them is allowed inside the Casino. Yes, we are very proud of our arrangements. For example, if a man takes a bank at chemin-de-fer and keeps on drawing a nine or an eight, an inspector will stop the game, despite the certain uproar, and insist on the cards being taken out of

the shoe and reshuffled." Apparently it is not difficult for a crook when offered the red card to insert a "sandwich" of a dozen selected cards which will automatically produce a sequence of coups for the person holding the bank at the time. At no other casino on the Continent is there such supervision of the clientele and such courage shown in preventing any possibility of cheating.

It is interesting to note at this stage that the official odds in favour of the Casino at trente-et-quarante are only 1.6 per cent. as opposed to 3.2 per cent. at roulette and, of course, 5 per cent. at chemin-de-fer. That is why the professional gambler always prefers the first named.

There were many other questions which would occur to you at once to ask René Léon when in so expansive a mood. I think I asked all of them. Among them was—How many suicides take place each year at Monte Carlo? The answer is that there were only three last year, and in two cases the dead person had money in his pockets. This led at once to a second query. Is it a fact that the authorities themselves plant money on a corpse to make it look as though his losses at the Casino had nothing to do with the case?

"I have been told that it was done in the time of François Blanc, my predecessor," said René Léon with a smile. "But I am far too stingy for that. On the other hand, I give away an average of a million francs a year to broken gamblers for their return fare and some sandwiches on the journey—but I only do it after strict investigation. So often people come and tell me they have lost a fortune—which is not true—and, if they get any money, return at once to the tables instead of using it to buy a railway ticket. The reason why Monte Carlo has such a reputation for breaking people is that so many are broke before they arrive, except for five hundred or six hundred francs with which they make their final desperate fling.

"In my long experience, by the way, I only recall one case of a man who arrived in this condition and who was successful. He was an Italian duke. He arrived with a thousand francs. He turned it into a million and left within a week. That was when francs were worth twenty-five to the pound. The extraordinary thing was that he never once had a losing throw. I very seldom have to give a return fare to the English. The Vice-Consul at Monaco is kept busy with them instead."

In reply to another question Monsieur Léon said that the record sequence for a colour is held by black, which turned up two summers ago twenty-two times running. Red's record is nineteen times. He did not know the record for an individual number, but three times is not at all unusual.

There are twenty-five policemen attached to the Casino and another 200 guards for the grounds and gardens. There are also 100 firemen. Monaco itself has an army of 300 men, who also do duty as policemen. The largest number of people ever in the prison at one time was twelve.

"What we notice with interest," René Léon concluded, "is that the passengers on the luxury cruising liners which so often visit Monte Carlo hardly gamble at all. They just buy drinks and postcards. As you know, the Monégasques are not allowed to gamble. Nor are any of the shopkeepers and tradesmen throughout the Alpes Maritimes. We request even English solicitors, bank managers, and others in a position of monetary trust in the South of France not to visit the tables. Occasionally they elude us, but not very often."

In the past five years René Léon has spent a hundred and sixty million francs on Monte Carlo, and he is going to spend more. Eighty-five years ago Monaco was a barren rock with a few olives. To-day, with its £60,000 golf course at Mont Agel, its luxury hotels, its rubber beach, its Country Club, its Sporting Club, its opera, its real gold *jetons*, its gaudy gardens,

and the whole of its trim sophistication, I find it almost impossible to withstand the lure of its winter sun and its winter sin.

In any event, I really feel I owe it to myself to find out which are the six lucky roulette tables, don't you ?

## CHAPTER XV

### THE GRAPE HARVEST IN CHAMPAGNE

EVERYWHERE, at the beginning of October, through the smiling, rolling country of Champagne, the peasants go out before dawn. If it rains they will not go home. They will take off all their clothes, yes, *all* their clothes, and hang them up to dry in the outhouses provided by the great champagne firms a few yards away from their presses. Fathers, mothers, children, fiancées—they will eat and sleep and wait while their clothes dry and they can go out again to pick the precious grapes and bring them back in their 60-kilo baskets to the counting-house clerk. In front of him they will upset the contents so that every bunch will be seen and no imperfect grape can escape his eagle eye.

I once spent one of the most interesting afternoons of my life at Reims. You observe that I do not spell it "Rheims." That is English and incorrect. Under the guidance of Prince Jean de Caraman Chimay, I walked miles underground. I saw literally millions of bottles of champagne for export.

It was an intriguing spectacle—the wrapping on of the gold foil, the packing into the cases and the nailing up prior to their departure.

After this, my guide led the way down multitudinous steps to the "caves," and caves they are. A cellar bears as much resemblance to them as an ivory back-stud to a full-grown elephant tusk. "Why didn't the Germans appropriate your stocks, considering they were in Reims for a week?" I asked, perhaps a little tactlessly. "They were very correct and so they touched nothing," was the abrupt reply. By this time we were walking down a vast corridor with stacks

of bottles of champagne maturing upside down. In one section alone there were 500,000 bottles. Altogether this firm has 9,000,000 bottles maturing. In addition to that there are the reserves. The neck of each bottle rests in the "punt" or hollowed base of the one beneath it. "You see," said my guide, "the hollow has a purpose. Indeed, it is necessary. It is not put there to cheat the customer out of a few drops." He then told me that it was the Widow Clicquot who was really responsible for the present-day popularity of champagne. Until 1815 it was not much more than a local *vin du pays*, approved, of course, by gourmets, but with no wide appeal. Good comes from evil, however, and the Russian, English, and other foreign officers who were quartered in the neighbourhood after Waterloo did not forget the delightful local wine they had drunk even when they returned home. It was the mail-order business which developed out of this recollection that gave champagne an international reputation. But another fifty years had to elapse before King Edward, as Prince of Wales, made it the fashionable wine of London.

The caves in which we were walking are any age. Some say they were carved out of the live chalk by the Romans in the third century, though what they could want the chalk for I have no idea. The temperature was between 50 degrees and 55 degrees. Even the bottles which had been there only a couple of years were covered in cobwebs. It was very dark and a man went in front of us with a candle attached to a wooden handle. From round a corner came a curious, clicking, clattering sound. Half a dozen men were handling the bottles, the bases of which were marked with a white spot. "They are working the sediment on to the cork," said Prince Jean. "This is the second fermentation, and it takes three months of skilful handling to see that the sediment concentrates on the cork and not on the sides or the base of the bottle. Each man does thousands of bottles a day, and

he knows to a fraction of an inch how to disturb them scientifically." We walked on another half-mile, where a loud popping sound could be heard. Here were the disgorgers. The disgorging is the man who ejects the sediment from the bottle when it has finally settled on the cork. He holds the bottle neck downwards, loosens the cork, and at the exact moment when the latter is driven out by the pressure the bottle is turned up and the cork flies out like a bullet, carrying with it the undesirable deposit. Beside the disgorgers are the men who pop in the new corks, and with them the same amount of wine that has escaped with the cork. "You English are very funny and old-fashioned," commented the Prince. "Years ago we discovered that the best corks are the plump ones. But you still insist on the out-of-date narrow ones, so you have to have them. Also you insist on the corks looking old, and so we keep them in the bottles for much longer than is needed, because if you had nice new corks you would think the wine was new, too." Noticing that the men were all working by candlelight in the centre of the deep gloom, I asked why they were not given electric light. The answer was that only candlelight enables the workman to see the extent of the sediment. Electric light is too strong.

Then we walked another two or three miles with the bottles stacked so tight on either side that a motor-car could be driven over them without damage, until at last we came up to the ground-level again. "You see those outhouses?" said Prince Jean. "They are full of empty bottles, and I will tell you something you will perhaps not believe. We have discovered that neither rain nor frost nor snow nor great heat will affect a bottle. Then why do we have outhouses? In order to protect them against moonlight. It is a scientific curiosity that the light of the moon makes them erratic—that is to say, that an abnormally high proportion of the bottles burst or break afterwards if they are exposed to the moon.

They become, how you would say, moonstruck, even lunatic. I will tell you something else. These bottles come here in great quantities and we have two men who test all of them. They put their fingers in the neck to see that they have the proper aperture and at the same time they snick them to make sure they give the right ringing tone. They will do as many as 45,000 a day, casting out the bad ones automatically."

From there we drove to the vineyards. As we went along Prince Jean told me that the proportion of magnums to bottles is one to twenty. In 1933 the vintage was small but probably the best since 1911. The grapes are quite tiny, not much bigger than wild strawberries. I saw and picked some myself. But the hot summer achieved a wonderful vintage which would produce a very heavy wine if it were not blended with the more acid wine of, let us say, 1931. How many people know, I wonder, that a high proportion of champagne is made from black grapes? Being a white wine you might suppose that they would all be white too. Apparently, though, the colouring matter of a black grape is all in the skin or next to the skin. This means that when the grapes are pressed they must be pressed delicately the first time so that the dark colour is not impressed into the juice.

I saw one of these mechanical presses. It is a wooden affair, about 8 ft. by 8 ft., with little runways to take the juice into huge receptacles on the lower floor of the building. Each press will take 4,800 kilos of grapes. This produces, at the first press, ten barrels of wine. At the second press, two more barrels-full are squeezed out. After that it is pressed again and the juice is sold to middlemen. Once again it is pressed, and from it comes that, to me, revolting liqueur, "Marc de Champagne." By now nothing is left but a purple mush like a vast plum pudding. This is given to the pheasants on the estates of the proprietors, and they adore it, pips, skins, and all.

Another thing I learnt was that a vine does not produce grapes until it is six years old. Its cultivation begins in February with the pruning of the old wood. This is generally done by the women, who cut off all the branches except the one which bore grapes the previous year, and even this is cut short. Pruning is followed by digging-in, each plant being buried except for the shortened branch. The wooden props are then put in so that the shoots can be tied to them with straw. In any event the shoots are not allowed to grow more than a yard in height in this part of the world. From that moment until the day of picking a constant war is waged against mildew and other troubles.

It must be most anxious work, and yet, out of the many vivid impressions from my afternoon at Reims, the chief one is of the charm and amiability of all the people associated with the wine from grape to bottle. It is true also of the Rhine and of Bordeaux and Burgundy. Everyone smiles and looks pleasant despite the desperately hard times.

That night and the next day I attended two banquets for the English, French, German, Italian, and Swiss civilian pilots who were having a joy week beginning at Reims, and it did not matter whether it was the wine waiter or the chef or anyone else, they were all smiling—and not forced smiles either. Nevertheless, thanks to the exchange, they are only getting two-thirds of the price for each bottle that they got before we went off the gold standard. For the price of champagne has not been increased, and if you buy it at your wine merchant's you can still get the best brands at 13s. a bottle, which includes a 2s. 9d. duty and the profits of the wine merchant after deducting the cost of transport. Of course, in a restaurant it is a different matter. But then the peasants don't know that, and would not understand the idiocy of the appalling increase of 100 per cent. any more than I do.

## CHAPTER XVI

### THE OYSTER'S WORLD

NEVER did I expect to find myself two miles out to sea fingering the starfish in a 15-ton yawl with orange-coloured sails. However, one day last autumn I found myself with Jesse Rowden, Fred and George Waters, Joe Cambourn, and Ernest Dommy—I in my London clothes and they in rubber thigh-boots, blue jerseys, blue jackets, and caps. The water was brown and choppy. We drove slowly forward with three of them slowly hauling in their drudges, as they call them, at Whitstable. Under my nose they brought them up out of the water—six fathoms of it—and deposited their catch on the deck. Crabs and burrs (as they call sea-urchins), and five-fingers (as they call starfish), and small soles, as well as various kinds of oysters, lay before me.

I had no idea that at Whitstable alone there are six varieties of oysters. Not only are there the Royal Whitstable Natives and the Native Roughs; there are also Portuguese, Americans, Frenchmen, and Dutch. But I am getting ahead of my story.

We are still two miles out from Whitstable, dredging for oysters, inside the square mile of oyster beds belonging to the Tabor Company, in whose oyster smack I am sitting. All round us are buoys and watch-boats. Three companies own the fishing rights of the six square miles where oysters are plentiful. Each of them has its watch-boat to see that free-lances (or burglars, as Jesse calls them) do not come out and steal their oysters. It must be a dreary life in a watch-boat. There you stay in four-hour shifts all by yourself, knowing that your very presence will prevent your having any work to do. Yet, as you sit there tossing at anchor, your eyes must

be skinned for marauders from Essex or locals from Whitstable.

But, practically speaking, nobody ever does. Only once in nineteen years has a strange "drudge" been found in the "creeps" of the Tabor Company. "Creeps" must be explained. They are three-pronged hooks let down into the water as an additional safeguard against "burglars." Carefully placed, like mines, all over each oyster bed, only the fishermen employed by the company know where they are placed, and woe betide any drudge which comes into contact with them. It hooks it fast, and there is no escape. "Drudges" also must be explained. They are a steel-meshed combination, 3 ft. wide, of net and scraper, and, when full, will hold 300 oysters. Three converging iron bars form the handle, to which is attached a rope. They are thrown overboard and then trawled for a distance of about 40 yds., by which time they should be full, and hauled aboard.

Every morning, whatever the weather, the men go out at dawn to fulfil the orders for the day telephoned from London. When I was there the order was for 9,000 oysters, and they were caught in about four hours. The actual order was for 4,000 Natives, 2,000 Britannies, 2,000 Bluepoints, and 1,000 Portuguese. These foreigners are laid at the rate of half a million or a million each year to fatten down below. This was made necessary by the terrible mortality of Native oysters following the dumping of T.N.T. and other poisonous chemicals at various points along the coast in 1919. It was estimated that 95,000,000 oysters were killed in this way, and the Government was asked for £500,000 worth of damages. After three years' dickering and manœuvring nothing was paid, and the only thing that the leaders of the rapidly dying industry could do was to import these foreigners to take their place.

Anybody who has been to Margate or Southend knows what a Portuguese oyster looks like. It has an oblong shell

and greenish flesh inside. The Dutchmen have a dirty-brown shell. The Americans are cone-shaped, with a brown face and a light back. The Roughs have what is known locally as German writing on their backs. The Frenchmen from Brittany are yellowish on the top side of their shell and greenish underneath. The flesh looks very much the same as the Native oyster and so, if you are wise, you should always see that your oysters are opened in front of you—unless you are perfectly certain that the restaurant you patronize is above trickery.

Indeed, it is just as important as seeing your bottle of Evian or wine opened in front of you, for it is not unknown for unscrupulous people to put a Dutchman on a Royal Native's shell. After all, nine-tenths of the public cannot be expected to distinguish even a Pyefleet No. 1 from a foreigner. How should they, unless they went down to the oyster fisheries and saw for themselves?

But we are still two miles out at sea and it is time we came ashore in the dinghy to see the catch "culled" again by the manager. Unless you have ever seen an oyster as it comes straight out of the sea you would never realize how it has to be beautified for the market. Maybe limpets will have to be scraped off, or "squats," as Whitstable men call the tiny red squids which the Essex men call "pocks," or barnacles, which the Whitstable men call "chitters" and the Essex men call "nuns." All this must be done with the ancient oyster knife, which is called indiscriminately a "cultic" or a "cultack."

As you see, there are two languages for the oyster industry, although Kent and Essex are only a few miles apart. Strangely enough, though, there is no slang word for the oyster itself. True, it is called "ware" in the trade. But that is a technical word for a full-grown oyster. No, the oyster has kept its name ever since the Romans first found them in the River Colne 2,000 years ago, then Sallust praised them and they

were sent to Italy for sale just as they go to Billingsgate or Pudding Lane to-day. In Rome they were the supreme delicacy. Heliogabalus is said to have eaten 100 dozen at a sitting (the modern record is held, I believe, by Mr. Percy Chapman, the cricketer, who once ate seven dozen !).

When the legionaries returned to Rome, they left the taste for the oyster behind them, and all through the troubled history of the Saxon, Danish, and Norman invasions the oyster was drudged at Whitstable and dredged at Colchester. Kings' favourites receive their barrels from wise councillors anxious to secure the King's ear. Queen Elizabeth had a great fancy for them. Colchester and Whitstable are fully entitled to precede their Natives with the adjective "Royal."

So far I have only described the oyster fishery at Whitstable. At Colchester it is done quite differently. It is as different as a market-garden is from a greenhouse. The breeding-ground of the oyster is over a stretch of four miles of the River Colne. During March, April, and May, 120 men are employed in dredging the river for mature oysters. These are then taken three miles away to fatten in the ugly little creek of Pyefleet. This creek is a mile long and about 200 yds. wide, with a sea-wall on one side and saltings on the other. There is only one company which owns the right to fish them—the Colne Fishery Company. It has no capital like the companies at Whitstable. Its shareholders are the 170 Freemen of the City. Each pays half a guinea a year, and in the good old days received as much as £48 each after all the expenses had been paid. To-day times have changed, and they are lucky if they receive £2 or £3.

Placed in the Pyefleet to fatten, the oysters are left severely alone at first, and then are taken out like sheaves of wheat out of a granary, according to the day's order. There is no skill in dredging them. They lie at the bottom of the creek waiting to be removed, and half a dozen men can take out

10,000 between dawn and lunch-time. That is one of the more interesting points about the oyster fisheries of Whitstable and Colchester. Although, even now, 2,500,000 oysters are caught annually at these two places, only sixty fishermen are employed at Whitstable to do the actual catching, and not more than twenty at Colchester. At each place, of course, there are the packers to consider, and at Whitstable there are the watchmen. At Colchester the 250,000 of Pyefleet Natives have to be guarded by the police. Five constables and a police motor-boat are necessary to prevent this treasure trove from being rifled.

Pyefleet Natives of the best grade are sold wholesale at 68s. a hundred, which means that each oyster is worth 8d. the moment it comes out of the water (rising to double that price when it gets to a smart London restaurant). In these hard times any number of people would be tempted to make an easy £50 in an hour or so unless the law was there to stop them.

At this point it is only fair to the oyster industry to explain why oysters are so remarkably expensive. On the face of things it seems ridiculous that a mere shell-fish pulled off the bottom of a river or the sea should cost so much. The answer is that it is one of the most delicate creatures to rear in the world, quite apart from the decimation caused by the T.N.T. It has dozens of enemies. The starfish wraps itself round the oyster and then eats it. The dog-whelk or tingle bores into it. The burr or sea-urchin eats the young brood. Mussels and American limpets squeeze them to death or shoulder them off their beds. Flatfish and shrimps eat the young brood—with the total result that only 20 per cent. of young oysters survive to the age of four or five, when they are marketable.

The American limpets first made their appearance thirty-nine years ago. Since then they have become an absolute

menace to the industry, and the manager of the Colne Fishery Company tells me that more than £10,000 has been spent during the last twenty years in getting rid of them. They attach themselves one above the other on top of the unfortunate oyster until it is completely smothered. The only thing to do is to knock them off the oysters as they are dredged up from the River Colne and then deposit them in huge piles on the saltings at Pyefleet. A year later their empty shells are thrown into the creek to enable the spat of young oysters to cling on and grow up. The starfish are so numerous out in front of Whitstable that Colchester boats go out and fish for them. In three days they can catch ten tons of them, which they sell to farmers for manure at 25s. a ton.

Many foreigners, it must be observed, are fattened at Whitstable. They are not to be compared or confused with the fully-grown ones exported direct to England. The trade in these is tremendous. Every year 50,000,000 oysters are eaten in Great Britain. Of these, 40,000,000 are imported direct. Of the remaining 10,000,000, half are supplied by Colchester and Whitstable in the proportion of five Whitstables to one Colchester. But whereas the Colchester oysters are all natives, three-quarters of the Whitstable oysters are fattened foreigners. Of the other 5,000,000, one-fiftieth come from Ireland and Scotland, and rather larger quantities from the Prince of Wales's Oyster Fisheries in Cornwall, the Rivers Yealm and Roach, Havant, Hayling Island, Bosham, Orford, Burnham, Rochford, and Mumbles. Not that all these places can guarantee supplies. The bad years from 1919 onwards have nearly killed some of them. The remainder of the 5,000,000—and they form the bulk of them—are more foreigners fattened at Brightlingsea, which now does a bigger trade in them even than Whitstable.

The biggest years in the oyster industry were 1916, 1917,

and 1918. Young subalterns on leave from the Front, who had more money to spend than they had ever seen before, spent it gorgeously on oysters. Jesse Rowden, of Whitstable, told me that in those three years they used to send up 500,000 a week to London, and always there were orders for more. To-day the whole output of the three companies at Whitstable is only 200,000 a week, while the whole season's output of Pyefleet Natives is only 250,000. No wonder they are expensive !

Another lost market is the Continent. Before the War, Ostend was a big buyer. Thousands of oysters used to go over each week and then were sent to the princelings of Germany, the grand dukes of Russia, and the smart restaurants of Paris. To-day, as I have pointed out, the tide has ebbed alarmingly. Instead of exporting them, we import them at the rate of 40,000,000 a year.

One of the advantages—in fact, the only advantage, of the foreigner over the Native, except the price, is that there is nothing to prevent them being sold all the year round, as indeed they are. The English oyster may not be sold after May 14 or before August 4. Why the Fisheries Act of 1877 chose these peculiar dates I do not know. That it was necessary, though, to have a close season becomes increasingly obvious every year. It is not merely that the oyster is sick for two months while it is spawning. It is a question of the English oyster being able to survive at all. Though its beds, 15 ft. under the sea, are kept relatively with the same sedulous care accorded to any ornamental garden belonging to a millionaire, its enemies are always on the increase.

It is always a question of supply and demand. Whitstable men say that our Royalty only eat Whitstable oysters and that the price of the Pyefleet Natives is due solely to their scarcity. Colchester men smile and say that the proof of the pudding is in the price it fetches.

It is not for me to discuss their relative merits. Like anyone else, I am no doubt fooled quite regularly by Dutchmen or Britannies when I think I am eating Native oysters of Whitstable or Colchester. True, I can detect the coppery flavour of the Cornishmen and the sweet taste of the American (Americans always say that English oysters have far too tinny a flavour to please them). But, bless me, if I am a real connoisseur, all I can do, like the rest of us, is to regret that I was not born in the days when they were  $\frac{1}{2}$ d. a hundred (in 1273), or 6d. a bushel (in 1393), or 4d. a hundred (in 1572). Even only twenty years ago, the best Colchester Native was only  $1\frac{1}{2}$ d. apiece.

One of the inevitable questions one is bound to ask is whether the oyster dredges ever dredge up anything of historical interest. The answer is: Surprisingly little. Numbers of clay pipes dating from A.D. 1600, Dutch brandy bottles, tiles from Arcachon in France coated with lime so that the spat could be eased off with a knife, staghorns, flint pistols, a battle-axe, and an occasional Samian jar are all that have been found. This is not surprising, really.

Year after year the beds are dredged with such methodical care that nothing can stay very long undiscovered except by an amazing fluke. As for oysters containing pearls, they are by no means uncommon, but the pearl is of no commercial value and of little interest. No, the oyster itself is the prize. He may be a rough fellow when picked out of the water, but he is examined, selected, and cleaned from excrescences as carefully as any prize-winning blossom at a flower show. After all, it takes something very valuable to equalize a dredge full of 300 potential threepences and sixpences, particularly if there are seven dredges being hauled in every few minutes for five or six hours.

But I refuse to be blamed if you still think they are too expensive, and so do the men of Whitstable and Colchester,

## CHAPTER XVII

### THE RENAISSANCE OF THE CELLAR

**D**URKHEIMER Feuerberg Gewurztraminer Auslese Wachstum J. G. Zumstein, D. Leiden, K. & K. Hoflieferant, Köln a/Rhein 1917.

Laboriously but joyously I write down these mystic words, sit back, and then indite again, with even greater enthusiasm: Forster Jesuitengarten Riesling Auslese Wachstum, Wilhelm Spindler 1920. Yes, I have been tasting two of the finest bottles of Rhine wine that the leading hock expert in the country could set before me at luncheon to-day. The long German words uncoil themselves like a benediction. Thank goodness enlightened people realize that wine, like music, is truly international, and whatever hard things may still be thought about the Germans, they make the finest still white wines in the world.

If you ask any wine merchant or any wine waiter, he will tell you that the most notable feature of the wine industry to-day is the increased demand for German wines and sherry. One West End wine merchant tells me that last year he sold £1,000 worth more of sherry than he did the year before. He added that of Liebfraumilch 1921 alone he has sold a thousand dozens in the last twelve months. Those are significant figures when you realize that whisky consumption has dropped by nearly a third, burgundy and claret by more than half, and everything else, except non-vintage champagnes and brandies, in proportion.

Mr. John Warren, the hock expert, who romantically married the daughter of Herr Eugène Ziegler, the senior partner in the biggest firm of hock growers at Cologne, when

he was billeted there in the Army of Occupation, is quite frank about the 1921 vintage. "It saved the industry," he says. "It was the first really good year since 1893, and nobody, however insular, could possibly refrain from buying it. An enormous amount of it has already been drunk, but we still have several hundred dozens of it in wood. It is such an enormous wine that it will go on improving for many years to come, just as the 1893 Schloss Johannisberger, when you can get it, is the finest hock you can possibly taste. Why, even now you will find that one bottle in three of the Rudesheimerberg 1865 is still sound.

"Incidentally, the last real hock vintage was 1929, though 1925 and 1927 were excellent years. The general depression throughout the world, though, is preventing wine merchants, whether German or French, from declaring certain years to be vintage years even when they are up to vintage standard. Fortunately for the German wines, the majority of them are fit for drinking when they are very young. Some are drunk too early, but many cannot be drunk too soon. Another advantage is that white wines do not have to be handled with the same care as red wines.

"Owing to high duties we suffer a great deal from falsification, but with better times generally we presume that the demand for fine wines will increase again."

Of this there seems little doubt. Mr. Arthur Kemp, one of the best-known wine merchants in London, tells me that for the first time for ten years young men are putting down cellars. A number of lordlings are among them, and here, to give proof, is the actual cellar laid down by a youthful earl whose photograph you see almost every day in the newspapers, together with the prices he paid :

			s.	£	s.	d.
10 doz.	Port, Croft 1922	. . . at	74	37	0	0
10 "	" Dow 1924	. . . "	72	36	0	0
10 "	" Cockburn 1927	. . . "	72	36	0	0
10 "	" Graham 1927	. . . "	60	30	0	0
10 "	" Fonseca 1927	. . . "	60	30	0	0
5 "	Champagne, Pol Roger 1921	. . . "	156	39	0	0
5 "	" Moët 1921	. . . "	156	39	0	0
5 "	" Heidsieck D. M. vin-					
	tage 1921	. . . "	160	40	0	0
5 "	" Pommery 1921	. . . "	162	40	10	0
5 "	" Perrier Jouet vintage					
	1923	. . . "	156	39	0	0
5 "	" Clicquot 1923	. . . "	154	38	10	0
2 "	Hock, Johannisberger Auslese Ries-					
	ling 1921	. . . "	132	13	4	0
1 "	" Forster Jesuitengarten	. . . "	138	6	18	0
5 "	" Liebfraumilch Nibelungen					
	Krone Riesling Auslese					
	1925	. . . "	120	30	0	0
2 "	Moselle, Graacher Himmelreich					
	Auslese 1925	. . . "	126	12	12	0
3 "	" Scharzberger Feine Aus-					
	lese 1921	. . . "	144	21	12	0
2 "	Brandy, 60 years old Liqueur	. . . "	312	31	4	0
4 "	Burgundy, Pommard	. . . "	54	10	16	0
2 "	" Clos de Tart 1923	. . . "	108	10	16	0
7 "	" Clos de Tart 1928	. . . "	74	25	18	0
			<hr/> <hr/>			
			£568 0 0			

"This fortunate young man," said Mr. Kemp, "has a large stock of older vintage ports in his cellars left him by his father, and also some old clarets which he is using up. You will notice that there is no claret in the list I have given,

as he is not himself a claret drinker and will just order a few dozens as he wants it for his guests. To make the cellar really representative he should, I suppose, have had a few dozens of Château Margaux 1920 at 144s., as well as some Latour and Haut Brion 1924 at 96s., and some Margaux 1928 at 92s. Naturally his spirits, liqueurs, light table wines, port from the wood, and sherry are bought as required."

Mr. Kemp then spoke generally about the wine trade from the point of view of the West End merchant. "People," he said, "have not, generally speaking, got the money for the vintage champagnes like the 21's. What they buy are the non-vintage wines which are so much cheaper. In the same way there seems to be little demand for old vintage ports. One of the reasons for this is the demand for sherry. I honestly do not believe that we shall ever get back to the days when the public would buy ports at 240s. a dozen. We have in stock Taylor's 1896 for which we ourselves paid 190s. a dozen. I doubt very much whether port will ever rise to more than 150s. a dozen except in very rare cases.

"If, mind you, we had bought that '96 vintage when it was two years old, it would only have cost 30s. a dozen, and it would not have been a gamble. Buying vintage port never is. If you know that there has been plenty of sun, and yet enough rain to keep the grapes fresh and moist, and the new wine leaves a strong taste of prunes on the palate, you know you have got what will become a thundering good wine. At the present moment the best ports to buy are the 1912's. The 1920's are excellent too, and even the 1922's have come on to the market. It may interest you to know that the last vintage year for port was 1927, though 1931 was such a good year that it would have been designated as such if it had not been for the slump. The last vintage years for burgundy were 1923, 1928, and 1929. The last vintage years for claret were 1924, 1928, and 1929. The last vintage years for hocks and

Moselles were 1921 and 1929, though the intervening years of 1925 and 1927 were also excellent. There is, of course, no such thing as a vintage year for sherry, but the last vintage years for champagne were 1923 and 1926.

"One famous firm of port shippers refused to treat any year between 1912 and 1927 as a vintage year, passing up 1917, 1920, and 1922. The result was that the wine trade rushed head over heels to buy their 1927 port, and they were able to charge an extra £10 a pipe (which means fifty-six dozen) for it. The last really good year for brandy was 1906, though there is still a certain amount of the 1896 . . ."

Mr. Kemp being evidently in reminiscent mood, I asked him which were his favourites of the various types of wine. This was his answer :

Champagne	A 1904 Pommery.
Claret	A '99 Lafitte.
Burgundy	A 1911 Chambertin.
Hock	A 1921 Steinberger Cabinet Beeren Auslese.
Port	A '96 Taylor's.
Moselle	A 1921 Berncasteler Doctor Auslese.
Brandy	An 1808 Grande Fine Denis Mounie, of which he sold twenty-five dozen to the late King.

Every wine merchant with whom you discuss his business will tell you that the restaurants and hotels charge too much for their wines, and, moreover, provide the wrong food for them. "How," they ask, "can you expect the public to drink fine clarets at prohibitive prices when its food is covered with dreadful sauces?" The restaurants reply that they give their public the food it wants, and the 100 per cent. profit they

make on their wines is essential to the upkeep of the orchestra and all the other overhead charges.

They say, too, that if people are going to drink champagne they will do so whatever the price, and that even if you brought the price down to 16s. a bottle it would not increase the number of champagne drinkers. In France, by the way, they started a new system whereby on certain days of the week in various parts of the country the price of champagne will be drastically cut. They hope in this way to increase the champagne habit. One English hotel manager tells me that more champagne is drunk in the restaurant to-day than it was thirty years ago. That may be—but what about the difference between 1928 and 1932? One would have thought it might be worth while to lower the cost of champagne and, indeed, of all wines, for a brief period just as an experiment.

Instead of this, one or two hotels like the Savoy have instituted the *carafe* system in order to encourage wine drinking. For the price of 3s. 6d. you can have a quart of Médoc or hock or *vin rosé*, and it seems to be meeting with considerable success. The Savoy, incidentally, is one of the few hotels where the corkage system—whereby a wine waiter receives a shilling per cork from the great firms as an inducement to push their wines—is frowned upon, and every day the corks are taken down to the furnaces in great baskets and burnt.

Another point about the Savoy which, with the Trocadero, is considered to have the best wine cellars of any hotel in London, is that Mr. Reeves Smith, the chairman of the company, gives lectures two or three times a year to the wine waiters, allowing them to taste samples of the wines, on which they make notes—with the result that if you ask a wine-waiter's advice about a certain wine he will be able to tell you from personal experience about its flavour. A final note about the Savoy is that they have the most expensive

hock in the country in their cellars. This is a 1920 Deidersheimer Kalkofen Riesling Beeren Auslese, and costs even the wine merchant £5 a bottle. No, I have never tried it !

From this to Red Biddy and Red Lizzie is a far cry. But to make this article at all complete it was necessary to find out about the more notorious as well as about the more notable wines. In the accepted sense of the word, Red Lizzie and Red Biddy are not wines at all. For a liquid to be a wine it ought to be the produce of fresh grapes pressed at the time of picking on the spot where they are picked. It is, therefore, a paradox to have a British wine, because we have no vineyards. What happens is that grape pulp is brought into this country under the Customs' definition of "Sweets" and is then fabricated into ruby wine or red wine. In the East End and the other poorer parts of the country old women order a glass of it and slip in a phial of methylated spirits, with the most terrific results from this wild and wonderful beverage. Since the last Finance Act, Red Biddy and Red Lizzie and their disreputable sisters have been disappearing fast. For there is a clause which says that nothing must be displayed for sale as liquor unless 95 per cent. of the contents have paid duty.

British wines must in no way be confused with the genuine Empire wines which supply a need that definitely exists for the cheap, wholesome article, and also enables the Empire preference system to work with some degree of success. Generally speaking, the Empire wine growers have not attempted to cater for the high-class trade, realizing that they cannot, for example, make Château Yquem in the centre of Australia. Some time ago there was a certain amount of trouble over the designations of these wines as being "ports" or "hocks." The shipper who gave me all these details said that his firm always referred to them as being Empire sweet wines or Empire dessert wines. These wines are sold in

prodigious quantities in the public-houses and grocery stores.

In the opinion of Mr. Arthur Towle, who is in control of all the L.M.S. hotels and buys wine for the whole group, the sale of burgundy in the North is still good, though the demand for claret has fallen off lamentably.

"It is obvious," he said, "that cocktails, cigarettes, and jazz bands temporarily killed good eating and good drinking. But it is a good sign that people have now stopped the habit of dancing between the courses. The public is getting slowly more selective both in food and wine. It finds that wine induces a more contented frame of mind, and realizes that there is nothing brutish in fine cooking or fine wines. In the case of champagne, it is my experience that people still drink the label, and it depends merely on how much money they have got as to what brand they will choose. Speaking generally about wine, I am sure that the *bon Dieu* did not intend us to turn corn and rye into drink, but one has any amount of Bible evidence about the virtues of wine. I only hope that the time will never come when wine drinking goes out, and we are left to dope ourselves with spirits."

I do not know how many of you saw an incredibly mawkish American film at the Empire Theatre in Leicester Square called *The Wet Parade*. But there is at least one point about it worth noting. That is the scene of the factory where bottles are equipped with faked labels and faked corks. In every luxury business there is always bound to be a certain amount of falsification. In the case of hocks and Moselles, dishonest German firms will invent the names of growers to make the faked stuff sound impressive. So it is very fortunate for the British public, whose taste has been so vitiated by smoking and cocktails, that English wine merchants are nearly all of them honourable.

It is still a "gentleman's" business, just as it was the first

trade which gentlemen (I hate the word, but it has no equivalent) were allowed to enter. Of course, there are a few black sheep, but they are discovered in a very short time and lose half their business within the following twenty-four hours. The best possible advice one can give to anyone, however small their intended purchase, is to go to a reputable wine merchant and to trust him entirely. There are so many methods of faking. Think of the millions of bottles of so-called 1875 cognac, which have been consumed in restaurants. Remember the old dictum that Napoleon was not a wine merchant and realize that there are not more than forty experts in the country who can tell a particular brand and vintage simply by a sip.

Speaking generally about the wine trade, the tendencies are all towards fewer vintages and lower prices. Several of the older firms of wine merchants have been able to carry on largely because they sent whisky to Nassau and Canada, where it was collected by bootleggers. This is just as well for the distillers, because Sir Walter Gilbey himself has been quoted to me as authority for the statement that the consumption of whisky in this country has decreased by half. In the restaurants the wine waiters sell five bottles of brandy to every bottle of Grand Marnier, which is the next most popular liqueur. Kümmel, Benedictine, Cointreau, and Crème de Menthe are the next in order of preference.

But the sale is only a fraction of what it used to be. More than one wine merchant has complained to me that it seems impossible for the growers, whether French, German, Spanish, Portuguese, Australian, or South African, to get together and encourage the wine habit irrespective of the individual client's personal preference. It might even be possible, he thought, to persuade the brewers to institute a joint campaign to start the German habit of drinking lager before clarets or hocks, and to persuade the gin and liqueur interests not to look

askance at sherry, and vice versa. Something certainly needs to be done to protect the trade against the almost intolerable duties to which it is subject. The carafe system is good in its way. So is the habit now prevalent in many clubs whereby vintage port is decanted, and members can have a glass without buying a bottle.

What is really wanted is a national wine association to encourage a national wine habit. But petty jealousies will no doubt prevent its formation before it is too late.

CHAPTER XVIII  
FROM HUDSON'S BAY

IT would not be quite accurate to say that the fur is still flying in the fur trade. And yet there is a good deal of strong feeling, and even of strong language being used, among the furriers. Two reasons can be given for this. The first is the increase in the wild-animal farms, particularly the silver fox farms. The other is the menace of a handful of unscrupulous shopkeepers who play tricks with imitation furs and old furs, and are doing their best to get the fur trade as bad a name as the antique business acquired a few years ago. Many of the first-class furriers would be only too glad to see an action brought against one of their dishonest colleagues for pretending that a red fox fur was a cross-fox, or that a Canadian sable was a Russian sable, or that even an old mole coat was new. For just as the average person had not the technical knowledge to realize real Sheraton when he saw it, so the average woman knows less than nothing about the tricks of the imitation fur trade.

Before going any further I feel I ought to put on a long white coat and place a ripe Stilton cheese on my writing table in order to get the atmosphere after a visit to the warehouse of the Hudson's Bay Company. Thousands of furs of every description either hang on pegs, or are piled on shelves—and there are no fewer than two hundred and ten different kinds of pelts, as they call them, officially listed by the fur trade. The fur of which the greatest number of examples were to be seen was silver fox, and before it has been made up it emits a sharp, cheese-like smell that is inclined to make you sneeze when you encounter it first. The warehouse of the

Hudson's Bay Company is only five or six years old, and is the finest in the world. Every room faces north because the coldest and cruellest light is needed, particularly with silver fox, so as to distinguish between the various grades of black, quarter-silver, half-silver, and silver. While I was there, dozens of white-coated, bowler-hatted men were examining bunches of furs and making little notes. They were buyers, mostly French and English, with a sprinkling of Germans, who were going to bid for the furs two days later at the public auction. For at the actual sale no furs are put on view—it would take too long—and so the buyers bid by their marked catalogue. In other parts of this warehouse I was shown anything from ermines to timber wolves—every sort, kind, and description of pelt. They had been trapped in the Far North, brought down to one or other of the many trading posts of the Hudson's Bay Company, sent over to England, and were now in many cases awaiting shipment back across the Atlantic. For England is the leading fur market of the world. It is true that there are small sales in New York and others in Leipzig and Leningrad, but London remains supreme—particularly since Hitler's régime.

Not so long ago, nearly fifty thousand silver fox furs were sold at a *supernumerary* session of sales in London made necessary by the tremendous exploitation of farm-bred silver foxes. The sale I attended took place in a huge room like a cinema, with a long rostrum instead of a screen at one end. On the rostrum sat the auctioneer, and on either side of him were four other men, selling-brokers, who were there to catch the eye of the buyers, both foreign and English. The average price of the furs was a little over £5, although four or five years ago they fetched £15 apiece, and six or seven years ago they fetched £25. Before the War they reached as much as £120 and £200. The highest price for an individual fur—and only two or three were sold separately as opposed to lots

of fifteen or twenty or more—was £40 10s. In the ordinary course of events the bidding advances by half-crowns and each of the four lynx-eyed selling-brokers has to catch every nod of the head, wave of the pencil, or other indication of a bid from all the buyers in their quarter of the hall. Sometimes it is very difficult, particularly when two men sitting one behind the other are bidding for the same lot, to make sure that the proper bids are noted. When there is any doubt the selling-broker points an accusing, or rather confirmatory, index finger at the man whose bid he has taken to make sure that the other, if he wants to go on, will not think that he has already bought it. There is none of the wild yelling which characterizes the auction sales of tea. It is a series of gesticulations, cracks of the hammer, and crisp announcements of the auctioneer, which are magnified by the loud-speaker at the far end of the hall. Normally there are separate weeks of fur sales in January, April, and October. As I say, it was the increase in the silver fox farms which made this extra sale necessary.

The question which arises about the comparative quality of the wild and the farmed silver fox is naturally looked upon from very different angles by interested parties. There are now 5,000 silver fox farms in Canada, several in Great Britain, and 2,000 more in Germany, Norway, and Sweden. The advocates of the farmed fox say that they are naturally better animals because they do not have to lead such Spartan lives, and are bred from the best wild specimens. The others say that there is no comparison between the two. They say that the tame fox is coddled, and because he does not have to hunt for his living, his food all turns into fat instead of going into his fur, with the result that the latter is neither so rich nor of such good colouring. A good illustration of the way Nature provides protection for animals when they have to fend for themselves is provided by the recent

discovery of a number of mice in a cold-storage room. Their fur was half an inch long. This is considered a very good argument in favour of the view that farmed wild animals are too coddled. Other wild animals which people tried to farm are minks. This proved a dire failure, however, in the eyes of Monsieur Revillon, who is the world's leading furrier. On the other hand, chinchilla rabbits proved a great success from the start, and their pelts fetched as much as £1 apiece. Over-production, however, has brought these down in price by successive stages, until they only fetch 2s. or half a crown now.

Here we encounter the other problem of the fur trade—the extraordinary increase in the skill of the firms who make up furs. Ninety per cent. of imitation furs are made from the humble rabbit, and perhaps it would be just as well to quote a word of warning on this subject from one of the experts I have been consulting. “The only permissible alternative for rabbit,” he said, “is coney, and one may say foxaline for hare flank, and ‘genet’ instead of black cat, as these words have been in general use for many years in the fur trade. Furs described with fancy names should be viewed with the greatest suspicion. The last word in the description of a fur should be the actual name of the actual fur; thus sable-dyed fox is right, and not fox sable. Such descriptions as ‘Near Seal,’ ‘Sablette,’ and ‘Nutriette’ are merely camouflage for rabbit in various guise.”

This expert then gave me a list of the leading types of genuine fur, together with a description of what you should look for if you were intending to buy one. Here it is, and you might be well advised to cut it out the next time you go shopping.

*Cat, Tiger or Ocelot.*—Two varieties. One small, brownish-grey, black marks, but poorly coloured and thin flat fur. The other is a handsome skin resembling a young

leopard, full fur, white flank, warm colouring, and marked with deep black rings.

*Cat, Civet.*—A small animal, the fur resembling skunk, of a dark chocolate colour with whitish markings. The best kinds are regularly marked with a kind of square pattern, the colouring white, clear and defined, and the fur long and silky.

*Ermine.*—Two kinds : Canadian and Russian. The latter is superior in quality. The fur should be pure white, soft and thick ; its length is about half an inch in the best qualities. The black tips of the tails are much longer and fuller in the Russian than in the Canadian variety.

*Fox, Cross.*—A large handsome skin. Colouring orange, dark flanks, usually some "silver hairs amongst the gold," and has a dark, almost black, cross marking on the shoulders.

*Fox, Silver.*—At the time of writing the most expensive skins are those with dark, well-covered necks, and about half the body well silvered. The fur should "flow" easily, and the best skins have plenty of fur on the hind-quarters. Extremely popular at the moment owing to the great success of farming and the low prices.

*Fox, White.*—Smaller than silver, and a distinct variety. Cheap skins are yellowish, but the very best are pure white right down to the leather. Has no distinctive "fox" smell.

*Fox, Blue.*—A slate-coloured fox. Two varieties, known as Greenland and Alaska. Greenland fox is frequently almost pale grey in colour, but its fur is silky. Alaska is bluer in shade, and the hair is more "crimpy." Rather an uncommon skin, and not too well known in this country. It has been fashionable in France for decades.

*Fox, Red.*—Canadian. The finest of the red foxes. Very large, very full, and brilliantly coloured. The better skins are as expensive to-day as silver foxes.

*Lamb, Caracul.*—A naturally brown or white lamb, but usually dyed black or grey. Smaller than Persian lamb, the fur is flatter and not so tightly curled, whilst the leather is softer than that of the Persian lamb. There are many cheap imitations of both Caracul and Persian lamb.

*Marten, American or Canadian Sable ; Baum ; Stone.*—All these may be either natural, topped, or dyed. “Topped” means that the top hairs have been brushed with a darkening compound, whilst “dyed” implies that the skin has been dipped in the dye. The price of a natural skin is over five times that of a similarly coloured, but topped or “shaded” skin.

*Mink.*—Canadian and American. May be described as the hardest-wearing fur that is used for the manufacture of coats. Hair should be silky and dark oaken-brown in colour, with a darker stripe running down the back. Good and reliable. Russian mink, which is harsher, is not good-wearing fur. Chinese and Japanese are not suited to coat manufacture, but work up into excellent ties.

*Musquash.*—Brown, the skin of the muskrat. Full fur should be looked for, and the colour should not be too red. Southern—flatter and less fur, comes from Central States of U.S.A. Black—the best is rather blue than black, thick fur, and dark-blue undergrowth.

*Persian Lamb.*—The points to look for are the brightness of the fur and the tightness of the curl; the most prized is the “coffee bean” curl, which term explains itself. The weight of the skins is also a point to consider.

*Caracul.*—A different type of lamb from the above, the brightness of the moiré design should be looked for.

*Fur Seal.*—The would-be purchaser should ask for Northwest Coast or Alaska seal. The other varieties—Lobos, Cape of Good Hope, etc.—are not so sound as the two above-mentioned. The fact of asking for these names would prevent the buyer being given some cheap imitation.

*Broadtail*.—Must not be too thin in the leather, or the outer skin will have a tendency to “crack.” The design should not be too regular, but rather a “watered” appearance.

*Nutria*.—Coypu Rat. Short thin pile and an evenness of colour (a light brown) should be looked for.

*Otter, Sea*.—One of the rarest of skins. Rich dark brown, slightly silvered, and good heavy pile. Used to trim men's coats in Japan. Was very fashionable in Russia under the Czars.

*Pony*.—The most popular fur of the year. Should be bright in appearance, brown or black in colour, light in weight, and a moiré pattern. The less expensive skins are shaggy.

*Raccoon*.—American, Chinese, and Japanese. The best is American. Good effective hard-wearing fur. Should be better known in this country.

*Sable*.—Russian. One of the most expensive furs. Long, dark, full silky fur is a characteristic of the best skins, and occasional silvering is no drawback. Cheaper skins are topped or dyed.

*Sable*.—Chinese. Not so good as Russian—inferior dressing and usually silvered.

*Sable*.—Japanese. Inferior in every respect.

You will notice two omissions from this list—chinchilla and fisher. The fisher is one of the largest of the martens, and the real expert would as soon give his wife a fisher fur as any. It is very uncommon in England. In general, its colour is greyish-brown or brownish-black, becoming a lighter shade towards the head. The tails are almost black and the pelts, used separately as ties, are as rich as, and more durable than, any other fur suitable for the use to which it is applied. Altogether the fisher is a remarkable animal. It is two or three feet long, yet it can enter a hole only four inches in diameter, and it is the most active of all animals that live in trees. The marten can catch the squirrel, but the

fisher can catch the marten. It is equally at home on the ground, and can run down hares in open chase. It runs the fox like a hound. It kills large deer, and even eats porcupines. The truth of the matter is that all the best furs come from small, fierce, cruel animals of the weasel and marten type, like mink, sable, and ermine, except the chinchilla.

The paradox of the chinchilla is that no chinchilla coat is less than ten years old. The reason is that the chinchilla, a small, amiable, South American land-rodent, has been so thinned out in its native haunts that a law was passed just after the War forbidding its export. Twenty-five or thirty years ago the chinchilla skin was very common, and fetched only five or six shillings a skin. At that time they were made up into children's muffs, or even into boas. To-day, a chinchilla pelt is worth £50, and a complete chinchilla coat costs anything up to £10,000. Its fur should be of a slaty-blue hue with a fine lustre, and "guard-hairs" perfectly white except for the points, which are slightly darkened. The centre or middle back is of a slightly greyish colour. I only know six women who own chinchillas, and one day I saw three of them having supper at the Embassy Club. It created quite a sensation when Gloria Swanson was followed by Lady Furness, who in turn was followed by the Comtesse de Villeneuve. The presence of Prince Lennart and his fiancée was completely overshadowed. Monsieur Revillon, when I mentioned this entrancing spectacle to him, told me that he has in the past few years seen the same chinchilla worn by three different women who, in turn, have bought it, sold it, and bought it again. An English Duchess and Fanny Ward are two other people I know who possess chinchillas. Monsieur Revillon himself is just as fond of a real Russian sable. These go up in price to £4,000 and more. They have to be bought nowadays from the Soviet. A sable skin which is only the size of your hand is worth anything from £20 to £100 if

it is a good one. The quality, as in all furs, depends on the time of year when the sable is trapped. There is all the difference in the world between a summer coat and a winter coat, and the best pelts must be taken in December or January.

The Hudson's Bay Company has no fewer than seventeen trading posts well within the Arctic Circle. The farthest north is at Pond's Inlet, where roving tribes of Eskimos bring in the pelts of white foxes to be bartered once a year with the company's ship, usually the *Nascope*. Money is, of course, no good to them. Bacon, flour, guns, rifles, and cartridges are what they want. The day when you could exchange a string of beads for a white fox fur is gone. At the other trading posts most of the furs come in from white trappers, and then are sent down in bales to Vancouver, Edmonton, Winnipeg, Montreal, and Quebec, where they await shipment to England. Despite everything there is no dropping-off in the fur business. Women's extravagance, as a cynic pointed out, will always guarantee their popularity.

## CHAPTER XIX

### LET'S GO BY AIR !

FOR the first time it is possible to raise the veil of privacy which has deliberately concealed the identities of some of the most interesting men in England. They are pilots attached to Imperial Airways at Croydon. The policy of the Company has been to guard them from all interviewers and personal publicity—a policy which has pleased the pilots themselves very considerably. Talk of the Silent Service—these commercial pilots are as difficult to pump as a tyre with a hole in it. And it is only after long conversations with three of them—Captain Walters, Captain Wheeler, and Captain Rogers—that I am able to tell their story.

These men have flown 7,000,000 miles, and at a rough calculation have between them spent eight years actually in the air. A veteran pilot is Captain Walters. He is typical of all of them except Captain Rogers. He looks like the captain of a merchant vessel, a resemblance increased by the dark-blue uniform with nautical rings on the sleeves. He is taciturn, thick-set, short, clean-shaven, handsome, middle-aged, and married. Romantic flappers who would like to think of these pilots as gay young Lotharios will be sadly disappointed, even though they are nearly all good-looking. Anxious old ladies, on the other hand, will be delighted to know that they are all between thirty-three and forty-one. One must admit that several of them do not look their age. But they account for this by the fact of their spending so much of their life in the pure air between 2,000 and 4,000 feet.

Captain Walters has greying hair and a quiet manner. He has flown for fifteen years. During the Egyptian outbreak

in 1919 he flew the mail service between Cairo and Alexandria. In 1923 he joined Handley Page Transport, having left the Service when instructor at the Central Flying School. He has done 6,500 hours in the air. Captain Olley has done 10,000. But we will come to him later. Several of the pilots served in the War. Two of them—Rogers and Perry—joined the R.F.C. before the War. Rogers has flown the Channel more than three thousand times. "By the way," he said, when I extracted this statistic from him, "we don't call it the Channel. We call it 'The Ditch.'"

It was hard to make Captain Walters talk. "We are mostly on the heavy side," he vouchsafed at last. "It comes of sitting for years in the cockpit. We are all very fit and rather ruddy, but we are inclined to get fat. There is not enough vibration in the modern aeroplane to do your liver any good."

In the summer the services from Croydon are doubled. Four machines arrive and depart each day on the Imperial Airways alone, and it is nothing out of the way for a pilot to fly to Basle and back in the same day—roughly a thousand-mile journey!

Now let us take Oscar Jones. He is known as "Captain Kettle," and he positively wears a beard. He is five feet six and a half inches and thick-set, and has by now done 8,760 hours in the air—which is a year exactly. Other pilots tried hard to pull his leg when they saw him come back on a routine flip from India with this golden growth on his chin. But they failed hopelessly to get a rise out of him.

Then there is Herbert Perry. He is small and short, and would be taken for a merchant skipper by anybody who did not know him. He was born in Birmingham and is stubborn but calm. He will fly in all weathers, and has five children.

"Wilky" Wilcoxson is the tallest and broadest of the Imperial Airways pilots. Plump-faced and ruddy-complexioned, I saw him flying Sir Philip Sassoon over to

France. During the War he served in the Third Hussars before getting a commission in the Middlesex Regiment. In 1917 he got in the R.A.F. In 1919 he demonstrated English aeroplanes to the Polish authorities so well that he was made an honorary member of the Polish Air Force ! He flew the first machine ever fitted with slots, and was a pioneer of blind flying. To-day he is very keen about golf, and though he is ready to fly every minute of the week, he always does his best to be back at Croydon so that he can play at the week-end.

Now meet Sam Wheeler. Sam looks like the first officer of a big liner. He is short and broad and clean-shaven, and began his flying career as a mechanic. He was several years with the Imperial Airways pilots before getting married, and has spent much of his flying time on Empire service. Even now, though he is no longer single, he much prefers to be chosen for jobs of this sort. "Flying the Ditch is pretty monotonous," he told me. "But any other job would be much tamer still, and I wouldn't give this up for anything in the world. I had a funny experience last summer. Being on the spot I was hired out to an American film company to fly low over some Arabs in the Near East. They got so excited that one of the Arabs fired at me, broke my wind-screen, and cut my arm. Flying on the Egyptian and Indian routes is more interesting than the Cross-Channel flights. You have more problems to face, so that there is always plenty to think about. Besides, you get more flying pay."

By now Dudley Travers will probably be back at the Cross-Channel route. Recently he has been senior pilot on the South African route. He is one of the youngest pilots, being only thirty-three or so, but is getting a middle-aged spread like the others. He has piercing blue eyes and a lantern jaw. He is always cracking jokes. With the possible exception of Donald Drew, who is usually on the Brindisi

section, he is the nearest approach to the flappers' idea of a Don Juan that Imperial Airways can provide. Donald Drew has a great reputation as a pilot, and anxious passengers are frequently asking whether he can possibly fly them to their destination. On one occasion a furious letter arrived from a client. She wrote that it was a perfect disgrace that Imperial Airways should employ a criminal as a responsible pilot. The poor lady had mistaken his name for Ronald True!

Nobody seems to know why Captain Youell is called "Jimmy," but that is his invariable nickname. Though he began his career at the age of fifteen as an apprentice mending punctures at the Beatty Flying School at Hendon, he looks a trifle more the public-school type than a merchant skipper. He is a little less thick-set than the others, but wears his cap tilted over one eye like Lord Beatty. He is a very sociable fellow. In 1916, when only sixteen years old, he was a civil instructor at Acton, and taught men old enough to be his father how to fly. By the time he was eighteen he was with the R.N.A.S., but will close down at once and refuse to say anything if you ask him about the enemy machines he brought down. He has flown the Prince of Wales to Copenhagen from Croydon. He was one of the first pilots to fly across the North Sea from England to Sweden. It was here, incidentally, that he met his wife. He has been an air-liner captain for nine years, and says he hopes, like his colleagues, that one day he will have his private quarters on his aeroplane just like the captain of the *Aquitania*, for example. No doubt he will, too.

Fred Dismore is an old hand. He is stout and five feet seven, with an infectious guffaw. He was determined to go aloft ever since he was a child and so he joined the Royal Engineers in 1911 in order to get into the balloon section. The Central Flying School in those days, he says, was a very odd place. The O.C. was a sailor, his assistant was

a Fusilier, and of the four flight commanders, two were sailors, one was an infantryman, and one was a marine, and they all wore the uniforms of their respective units.

Fred Dismore went out to France in October 1914 with the British Expeditionary Aircraft, and survived the War without a scratch; and his pilot's certificate is dated August 5, 1913.

If one wanted to make a joke about G. P. Olley, one would say that he was more punctual than his initials would suggest. Captain Olley is a special charter pilot in Imperial Airways. He is small and tubby and cheerful. When I saw him he had just come back from flying Mr. Willie Vanderbilt over the Sinai Desert, and Mr. A. K. Macomber, that other American millionaire, over the big-game hunting area in Kenya. He never knows from one minute to the next whether he is going for a flip to Deauville or is off to India or Shanghai. He has flown Dutch machines as well as English machines, and has carried about forty thousand passengers. He is often used by clients who have missed the boat-train and wish to catch the boat. He wears a moustache, and his hair is brushed back.

I have not met either Captain James or Captain Armstrong, and so we come to Captain Rogers, the chief wag of Imperial Airways. He was a sergeant pilot in the War, and for the last eighteen months of it was attached to the Ferry service, which was detailed to fly new aeroplanes over from England to France. He has flown the Channel more often than any other man alive. He is small, very alert, with dark-brown eyes and black hair. He is proud of the fact that he is a typical Londoner, with a Cockney sense of humour and bird-like movements. He is the only pilot I met who likes playing practical jokes. But he flew me back from Paris recently, and I never had a more comfortable trip. He is so keen on the job that he calls his house near Croydon "Le Bourget," and he insisted on his first son being named Handley.

"In the winter," said Captain Rogers, "we get a day and a half off each week. In the summer we are lucky to get a single day off. If you run through to Switzerland in the day you will leave Croydon at 8.30, which means you must be on the aerodrome an hour earlier. You then fly to Paris, where three-quarters of an hour is spent in refuelling. On you go to Basle, with another three-quarters of an hour for refuelling. Then you turn round and fly back to Paris, and after the refuelling business you return to Croydon at nine at night. The next day you may get an easy trip, say the 12.30 service to Paris, returning on the 5.30 service, which lands you at Croydon about half-past seven.

"When the weather is bad the flying is done by wireless direction and position. This is the sort of thing that happens. You say on the wireless telephone, 'Hullo, Imperial X.C., this is X.D. calling. I am flying at two thousand feet in cloud. Please give me your height and position.' X.C. replies: 'Hullo, X.D. I am flying above the clouds at five thousand feet. Suggest you fly at this height. I have just passed Tréport. Please give me weather between you and Croydon.' He then passes his weather information to you, and you do the same, with suggestions such as 'Visibility a thousand yards; cloud height two hundred feet. Climb to three thousand, but on approaching Beauvais clouds become broken to eight parts. Suggest you fly above, as by time you reach Paris clouds will be broken at the aerodrome.' Imperial pilots are the only ones who use radio-telephony. The others use wireless. Probably you have heard us on your own set. My wife often listens in.

"Our hobbies are mostly golf and gardening and motoring. Motoring and golf are both a much bigger strain. It seems silly when we can keep a forty-seater aeroplane straight that we cannot steer a thing like a golf ball."

Captain Rogers refused a cigarette, but continued :

"Women are much more sensible than men. They ask fewer questions and have more tact. Some of the men ask rather foolish questions. Here is a conversation I had the other day. 'Hullo, are you the driver?' 'Yes, sir, I am the driver.' 'Has this machine got four engines?' 'Yes, sir.' 'Can it fly on two?' 'No, sir, it does not, but it would climb on three.' The passenger becomes flabbergasted at this and shuts up, or else brings out some of his own technical knowledge, which is often amusing. We frequently have honeymoon couples on the trip. When it is bumpy we do our best to give them a smooth crossing. The stock questions we are asked are, 'Will it be rough?' 'Is the wind against?' 'Surely you are not the pilot, you look far too young?'

"Last summer an old man who was aged seventy told me after the flight that he must send me a present, and that as he lived in the Isle of Man he would send me something typical. Three days later two pairs of Manx kippers arrived. They had taken three days on the journey, and they were rather higher than the Channel flight!

"As you noticed when you flew over Paris, it is part of the pilot's duty to hand over the control of the machine to the second pilot and walk down the machine to see how the passengers are getting on. Last week I left the door of the cockpit half open, and a man sitting in the body of the machine could see my wheel revolving aimlessly. I cannot tell you how horrified he looked. Quickly he nudged his neighbour, who stared in horror. They could not see the second pilot, just round the corner.

"Altogether it is a very good life," Captain Rogers concluded. "The Ditch is hardly even monotonous; one scarcely notices it any more. We get very good pay. It would be impossible to have a more open-air life, and I do not think any of us looks his age."

## CHAPTER XX

### SEEING ABOUT A DOG

AT a conservative professional estimate, about £20,000,000 is sunk in this country in the industry of dogs—and I am not taking into account either foxhounds or greyhounds. Mr. Charles Cruft has a mail-order list of no fewer than 30,000 people who have exhibited show dogs. Their kennels may house anything from 20 to 400 show dogs. One exhibitor, who is also a famous figure on the commercial side of the motor-car world, told him not long ago that his kennels cost him £15,000 a year. Among other expenses he has twenty keepers all the year round. There is a woman who spends £6,000 to £8,000 on her kennels. She, like the motor-car magnate, does it as a hobby. I say nothing of the professional dog breeders who make a livelihood out of it.

Throughout my investigations into the dog industry, which involved a visit to the Kennel Club Show at the Crystal Palace, I have been struck by the high figures which stud the studs. I had already heard of an American friend of mine who lives in Boston, and who recently bought four English terriers at £1,000 apiece. America, one must admit, is our best market. But one should emphasize the point early on that the dog industry is one of the very few in this country the exports of which are out of all proportion higher than the imports.

One expert, whose name is a household word among dog breeders, summed up the situation very nicely. "It is just like the Stock Exchange," he said. "It is a gamble to all except the handful of experts. Just as the shares of a company go up and down, so do the prices for puppies and stud fees of various breeds of dogs. A dog, like a share, is only

worth what you can get for it. Sometimes the market gets saturated, and the people who came in at the tail end of the boom, and paid high prices for champions with a view to breeding from them, suddenly find that there is no one to whom they can sell. Too many people have got into that particular stock, and the bottom has fallen out of the market. That explains, of course, why there are so many recognized breeds of dogs compared with forty years ago. The clever people sell out at the top, and then go in for some new or almost unknown variety of which the supply is small and of which the puppies command a high price; if, that is, the breed 'takes on.' "

The expert thereupon showed me a list of the eighty-eight breeds classified at Cruft's last show. "Mind you," he said, "I could name you another hundred varieties, like the German boxer dog, the lion dog, and the Belgian sheepdog, which do not figure on this list. But even taking these, only a third of them were known in England in the 'nineties."

We went through the list alphabetically. Afghans, of course, are new. Basset hounds and beagles have almost died out. Only two or three kennels of them exist. Bloodhounds are old, but there are not many of them about. Borzois were introduced into this country by the Grand Duke Nicholas of Russia. He gave one or two to the London Zoo and then some shrewd breeders grew interested, went over to Russia, imported a few of them—and look at them now. Long-haired and wire-haired dachshunds are very new. Deerhounds are old, but elkhounds are new. Passing over foxhounds, greyhounds, harriers, and Irish wolfhounds, we come to otter-hounds. Nobody takes a technical breeding interest in them nowadays. The average otter-hound is half a bloodhound and half any old mongrel. That is the difference between the show dog and the working dog. All that matters in a working dog is that he should

work. Nobody cares about his points. That was true of almost every dog seventy years ago. Before the first show held at Newcastle in 1859 (an event which led indirectly to the formation of the Kennel Club), any dog belonging to Tom or Dick was as good as Harry's, with the exception of the few distinct breeds bred exclusively on ducal estates.

Here one should point out that it is mostly due to the Kennel Club that the industry has been so largely cleared of fraud, and the art and commerce of dog breeding has been made so clean and socially reputable, so that the highest in the land can engage in it without qualms. The fact remains that otter-hounds are becoming rapidly debased because nobody is interested sufficiently in them as show dogs to exhibit them in shows. To finish with hound dogs, we have Salukis, who have been introduced since the beginning of this century, and whippets. Next come gun dogs, headed by English setters, Gordon setters, Irish setters, crossbred setters, pointers, curly-coated retrievers, flat-coated retrievers, and golden retrievers, all of whom are old stagers. The Labrador, however, is another pair of shoes, or perhaps I should say paws. It was in 1906 that the Labradors first appeared to challenge the popular flat-coat. To-day the stud fees of some champion Labradors are as much as 50 guineas a time. Think of what you and I might have made if we had got in on the ground floor! To-day they are the biggest breed of gun dog in existence.

In 1906 the golden retriever was ignored, and cockers hardly outnumbered Sussex spaniels. The English springer was unknown. Clumbers, field spaniels, and Irish water spaniels were in existence, of course. But the latter breed, to revive which strong efforts are being made at the moment, is never likely to catch on. It is too much trouble to keep them in coat. That goes equally for Bedlington, another old but troublesome breed. Welsh and English springers

never figured in the 'nineties; and as for Australian terriers (for we have come to the terrier class), it was only at the last Cruft's Show that they were recognized as a class at all. I have skipped Airedales as they are so ancient and honourable a breed, and I have already spoken of Bedlingtons. Border terriers are new, and then comes a string of old reliables like bull-terriers, Cairns, Dandie Dinmonts, smooth-haired and wire-haired fox-terriers, and Irish setters.

We are then brought up on a round turn with Kerry blue terriers and Lakeland terriers. The former have only recently come into fashion. The latter actually go back two or three hundred years, but they were known only to Lord Lonsdale's forbears and their neighbours until a very short time ago. After Manchester terriers came Sealyhams, who were unknown outside Pembrokeshire until 1911, Skye terriers (who are old stagers), Welsh terriers, and West Highland whites. Miss Henrietta Bingham, the daughter of the American Ambassador at the Court of St. James's, was showing them at the Crystal Palace last week. Not a bad tip for any enterprising breeder with American connexions.

The realm of non-sporting breeds is headed by Alsations, who are now called by the Germans "German sheepdogs," as they will not use any word that reminds them of Alsace-Lorraine and the late War. They, of course, are distinctly new to this country. But at the moment it looks as though their market is getting rapidly saturated. After our old friend the bulldog comes that recent breed, the bull mastiff. Chows are also old friends. Yet one of them was sold the other day for £2,000. Their peculiar mentality and intriguing independence have made them increasingly popular, and this year there has been quite a spurt in their numbers at the Kennel Club. Collies, both rough and smooth, are next on the list. Once upon a time they were very popular. Now they have gone completely out of fashion. Dalmatians, of

which there are only two in the whole of Dalmatia, are one of the oldest breeds in this country. The "plum-pudding dog" figures in the coat of arms of Lord Shrewsbury. Indeed, if you look at any picture dating back to medieval times which contains a dog, you will notice nearly always it is a kind of Dalmatian. French bulldogs have been known for a long time. The Great Dane has changed his nationality. He used to be known as the German boarhound. A recent addition to the list is the keeshond—a Dutch dog the standards of which have recently been drastically altered by the Dutch canine clubs, with the result that the English breeders are in a state of hopeless confusion.

Mastiffs, Newfoundlands, Old English sheepdogs, poodles, and St. Bernards have been with us for a long time. The St. Bernard is an instance of a breed which has lost its popularity with astonishing speed. Forty years ago you would have as many as 300 entries at a dog show, and the St. Bernard Club could practically dictate to the Kennel Club. How often do you see them now? Samoyedes have only appeared on the scene in the last thirty years. That is also true of schnauzers. Schipperkes, however, date back to the 'eighties. Shetland sheepdogs are old friends, and in contrast Welsh corgis are very recent indeed. They are small dogs which prove more clearly than almost any other breed that all dogs date back to the original wild dog. This species, if allowed to do so, would probably revert more quickly to its original type than any other.

We are now left with the toy dogs—the black-and-tans, the griffons (formerly known as monkey dogs), the Italian greyhounds, the Japanese spaniels, King Charles spaniels, the Maltese, the papillons, the Pekinese, the Pomeranians, the pugs (which have almost completely died out), and the Yorkshire terriers. All of these have been known to us for over forty years, but the Pokes, together with the cockers and the

Cairns, have earned more quick money for their enterprising breeders than any other kind of dog.

I have given this long and extensive list to emphasize my point of similarity between the Stock Exchange and the dog-breeding industry. Fashions in dogs are as fickle as those regulating women's dresses, and you can lose or make money with equal speed if you choose the wrong breed or select one that is at the time the vogue. Having acquired all this information, it naturally interested me to find out how it would be possible for anybody with a certain amount of capital and a knowledge of dogs to double or treble his money. Could you, for example, invent an Aber-Cairn, thus crossing two delightful kinds of terrier and producing a no doubt intelligent hybrid? The answer is both "Yes" and "No."

If you went along to the Kennel Club and said that you had produced a new kind of dog which you wished to have classified as a new breed, and admitted to them that in fact it was half Aberdeen and half Cairn, you would be ruled out of court. For though it is quite a conundrum as to where a cross-breed ends and a new species begins, you are not allowed to cross already well-known breeds in this way and claim the progeny to be a new type. What you could do, however, would be to go to, let us say, Timbuctoo, taking your Aberdeen and your Cairn with you, mate them, and then come back with the resultant litter. On your return—mind you, this is all most fraudulent and would probably be found out in any event—you would then say that these dogs were a rare kind of French Sudanese terrier, and had been bred for hundreds of years by, let us say, the Sultan of Pip. That would be your only chance. Supposing you got away with this, you would then give away puppies to various friends of yours on the understanding that they would show them at the next dog show which they were able to attend. As there would so far be no class for the French Sudanese terrier,

the puppies would have to be shown in the "Any other variety" class.

Then if the new dog caught on (and all your friends would presumably be boasting that they had a positively unique animal) you might succeed in getting it registered as a new breed. If all went well thereafter you would be able to sell your puppies for the next two or three years at 15 guineas or 20 guineas a time. This may be treated by canine authorities as both silly and farcical, and yet it is not quite so farcical as all that. Every year new breeds of dog appear on the market. At Cruft's, Australian terriers and Boston terriers are now officially recognized. Let me hasten to say that they are perfectly genuine dogs of a perfectly genuine breed, and there is no funny business attached to their arrival on the scene. In the same way, the German boxer dog and the lion dog will be coming along one of these days. At the moment there are not enough of them to be worth a class. Another dog which may prove a good bet is the Finsk Spets. This is a Norwegian dog, the great charm of which is its novelty. If it really takes on it will mean a lot of money for its breeders.

Actually for a dog to be a champion he must receive a championship certificate from three different judges. When this happens his value bounds up geometrically, and his owner is not likely to part with him whatever the price offered. For he is his owner's stock-in-trade, and by his stud fees provides a useful income. There are numbers of champion dogs, including Pekinese, whose stud fees are as much as 30 guineas a time. So that the £700, £1,200, or even £2,000 which is often offered and seldom accepted is not unreasonable.

Meantime, it is satisfactory to know that English dog breeders are the cleverest in the world, and English judges are held in the highest repute. Mr. J. W. Marples, for example, left London in 1933 on a tour of dog judging in

South America, Canada, India, Australia, New Zealand, and the United States which will not be completed before 1935. That shows the high regard displayed towards English judges, and also the extent of the overseas market for this industry.

To get back to the finances of dog breeding, there are numbers of dog breeders who expect to make at least £2,000 a year clear profit. Then think of the amount of money spent in building kennels and all the hundred-and-one indirect by-products of this industry—dog collars, medicine, dog biscuits, and so on. Expert knowledge naturally reduces the element of luck, but it can be nothing but good fortune for the most intelligent breeder if in a single litter he gets as many as three or four champions, which sometimes happens. Yes, the more one looks into it, the more one realizes the element of luck. In the neighbourhood of Highbury some years ago an Old English sheepdog was bought from a drover for 5s. He became the pillar of his breed and was worth anything that his fortunate owner would have liked to ask. I have been given instances of women who had never shown dogs in their lives who were taking their solitary puppy for a walk in the park when some stranger said pleasantly to them that they had a nice little dog and ought to show him. They have done so, with the result that they have been offered anything from £500 upwards for what they had bought for a £5-note.

Yes, it is an industry which in the past twenty years has grown out of all proportion. But if you think of going in for dog breeding you would probably be well advised to regard it as a hobby and not as a livelihood. As I have said, it is just like the Stock Exchange with the shares (in other words, the prices of the various breeds) rising and falling almost as rapidly as any stock on Wall Street.

## CHAPTER XXI

### NO MOANING AT THE BAR

IT is typical of human nature that as soon as conditions become more prosperous people get quarrelsome and litigious. At the present time there are grand openings at the Bar for any young barrister with personality. A very experienced solicitor tells me that there are at least 360 barristers earning over £5,000 a year; there are at least seventy-five earning more than £10,000 a year; there are about thirty earning over £20,000 a year; and a very select few who are on the £40,000 a year mark.

It is noticeable that the Bench does not attract the great Leaders as it used to do. No wonder, now that a Judge's £5,000 a year has been cut to £4,000 a year, and is even then still subject to tax. Most laymen would imagine that the Lord Chancellor was the head of the English Bar. In point of fact that position is held by the Attorney-General, who gets £8,000 a year and fees which run into £7,000 more. Indeed, he is much the best-paid member of the whole Government. That he is head of the Bar was proved some years ago when the late Lord Birkenhead quarrelled with Sir John Simon, and the former said some rude things because Sir John did not appear at the House of Lords when Lord Birkenhead was sitting as Lord Chancellor. Sir John Simon replied that he would take the matter to the Attorney-General. The tiff was patched up, but its point was emphasized.

The chief Bars are the Parliamentary Bar, the Common Law Bar, the Chancery Bar, the Probate and Divorce Bar, the Criminal Bar, and the Admiralty and Commercial Bar.

There is also the Revenue Bar, if one can use the phrase colloquially, not to mention Companies Court.

The Parliamentary Bar is the most profitable and also the most dull, except the Revenue Bar. For even the Chancery can be interesting. At the Parliamentary Bar the fees are larger. The work deals with the promotion of Private Bills in Parliament and matters before the various State Departments such as Health Ministry inquiries, town-planning, and so forth. I should say that Mr. Tyldesley Jones, the good-looking K.C. with a smooth manner, has the most lucrative practice in this field.

The Criminal Bar is the least profitable, but achieves the greatest publicity. The trouble is that barristers from other Bars go over for the plum jobs. For example, Sir John Simon and Sir Patrick Hastings both figured in the Kyslant case. The leaders of the Criminal Bar are Mr. Roland Oliver and Sir Henry Curtis Bennett, the latter being one of the most thorough counsel I know. At this point it is worth noting that the stories you read in the daily newspapers about briefs being marked at 500 guineas, with refreshers of another 100 guineas a day, are mostly nonsense. You can get as good a counsel at the Criminal Bar for 100 guineas as you want. Refreshers, by the way, are a third or two-fifths of the original fees, and are paid daily. Juniors get as a fee two-thirds of their leaders' fee, and in turn one-third or two-fifths of their original fee.

It is interesting to note that guineas paid to counsel are not £1 1s. There is an extra 2s. 6d. or 5s., according to the amount, for the clerks. Thus, if a solicitor marks a two-guinea County Court brief, he actually pays £2 4s. 6d. The expression is "for fee and clerk." The clerk, however, gets more than 2s. 6d. in the conferences, that is to say, the consultations, so no wonder he likes them.

A story is still told of a famous counsel who left nearly

£750,000, that he always compounded his clerk's fees, which, if he made—as he did—£60,000 a year, should have amounted to £3,000 a year at the rate of 1s. in the £. Actually he is said to have got the clerk at £200 a year, and then, so mean was he, got rid of the clerk and made his daughter do the work for nothing.

It is a curious fact that, technically, fees paid to counsel are honorariums. In other words, if a solicitor bilks a barrister, the barrister has no legal redress. What would happen, however, would be that the firm of solicitors would be put on the Black List. For solicitors are morally responsible for the payment of the barrister even though their client fails to put up the money.

The Common Law Bar involves contract and tort. This means disputes arising over agreements, and wrong done independently of contract, such as injuries under motor-car accidents, libel cases, and slander cases. Incidentally, it is very fortunate for the Bar that there should be so many running-down cases. They keep the young fellows busy in the County Courts and the old ones fully employed in the High Courts. The leaders of the Common Law Bar are Sir Patrick Hastings, Mr. Stuart Bevan, Mr. Norman Birkett, and Sir William Jowitt. Brilliant as these men are, however, the leading authorities will tell you advisedly that the greatest lawyer and advocate (an unusual combination) at whatever Bar he appeared for the last generation has been Sir John Simon. He earned at least £50,000 a year. I say nothing, also advisedly, of his capacity as a statesman.

The Divorce Bar is usually the easiest practice in the world. After all, an undefended case takes only eight minutes, so the counsel gets an easy "five and one." This means the 5 guineas on the brief (£5 10s.) plus £1 6s. for a conference (if he gets it). Many well-known Juniors can do seven or eight on Monday morning. Nice work. You may take it,

however, that the Divorce Bar is the most looked down upon of the lot, and no great personalities confine themselves to this Bar.

Another very well-paid Bar is the Admiralty and Commercial. It deals with shipping, and is very much specialized. Indeed, about a dozen firms of solicitors get 95 per cent. of the cases. It is said of the late Lord Justice Bowen, the great Common Law Judge, that when he had to sit in the Admiralty Division he addressed the members of the Bar as follows: "Though accustomed to a different Court I am sure I can rely on your assistance, and may there be no moaning at the Bar when I put out to sea."

The Chancery Bar concerns itself with administration of trusts and the determination of all matters of equity. Parts of it are lucrative and the work is always regular. Here, too, in spite of stories, practically speaking, the best of the Leaders in a case that is not very heavy can be got for 200 guineas.

In February last year seven new K.C.s were appointed. Two of them came from the Common Law Bar and two from Chancery. One is an M.P. and over sixty years of age. Another is only thirty-five—obviously a man with ambitions like Sir John Simon, who took silk at the same age.

There are disadvantages as well as advantages in taking silk. A K.C., for example, has nothing to do with pleadings, that is, the statements of a case. This cuts off a great deal of the work and income, for a Junior earns a great deal from this incidental preparation of the case. There are Juniors who have become Leaders (the legal man's name for a K.C.), but who, as a result of self-obliteration in the past, have got no work later on. Often it does not pay to take silk.

Age has nothing whatever to do with being a Junior. There is one Junior still practising at a very lucrative Bar who must be quite eighty-seven.

In conclusion, the House of Lords is the most informal

Court of all. There is the Lord Chancellor admittedly in his robes, but the spectacle of two or three other old gentlemen seated on the red seats is not very imposing. Nobody else wears any of the paraphernalia of the law.

Nor must one forget that highly specialized branch of legal work which deals with patents and trade-marks. There are both solicitors and barristers specializing in this. But to what extent are barristers dependent on solicitors? The answer is, "Entirely." It does not matter how much newspaper publicity a Leader may get if he is not well thought of professionally. Up to a point a jury may be affected by the fact that they are being addressed by a K.C. Contrariwise they may want to do the usual English trick of being sympathetic to the under-dog because he is represented by an obscure Junior. In any event, a solicitor has to be as careful over the barrister he selects as a news-editor has to be over the type of reporter he sends out. In both instances certain barristers and certain reporters are brilliant at one kind of assignment and bad at another. Particularly must the solicitor beware of a counsel who may, on the one hand, pull off a difficult case, but may, on the other hand, inflame the damages.

## CHAPTER XXII

### THE £ s. d. OF PIERS

THE burning of so many famous piers, particularly on the Lancashire coast, has put this peculiar form of public entertainment into a degree of limelight which it has not enjoyed for many years. Piers have been a peculiarly English form of enterprise for a number of years. The laws which prevent casinos in Great Britain have given rise to a number of ingenious methods of evading the authorities. They have also given rise to piers. To-day there are about fifty of them. No popular seaside resort worth the name is without one. They range in size from the one at Southend, which is well over a mile in length, to little fellows which are not much more than a tawdry extension of the local breakwater.

Piers are the distinguishing feature of the English seaside resort. Their attractions are full of glamour for both young and old. The bands offer lovely music, frequently by the best regimental and other orchestras in the country, and from their farthest point "adventurous youth angles for the less sophisticated form of fish." Most of the piers are relics of Victorian days, and are vulnerable to the slightest flame from a dying cigarette or a lighted match. But Victorian or no, they evidently fulfil a deep-standing demand from the public. In 1933 no fewer than 1,784,602 people paid to go on the Palace Pier at Brighton, and don't forget that a mile away is the equally satisfying West Pier. The Palace Pier at Brighton is a private company, and so it is impossible to learn the exact takings, mostly in pennies, which it acquires every year.

But it is possible to believe that these are very considerable, indeed not far short of—well, even now I dare not state a

figure. This I can say: it shows very heavy dividends, although a sum of no less than £57,178 7s. 2d. was spent in wages and general upkeep last year. The electric light bill is £1,600 a year (thanks to a cut rate). The lights, of which there are 4,700, can be seen sixteen miles in any direction except inland, where the cliffs obtrude. The cost of the bands in 1932 was £4,409 5s. 9d. (was the 9d. for a drummer-boy, I wonder?). The wage list in 1932 was £25,650, about £900 less than in the previous year; a drop, presumably, attributable to the sudden vogue for cruising. The actual number of people employed on this pier is 309. This includes three carpenters, five blacksmiths, a plumber, four electricians, two firemen, twelve uniformed deck hands (who preserve order, rescue suicides, and moor boats), six chair attendants, any number of mechanics (who have to adjust automatic machines), waitresses, and the like.

The modern pier, in fact, is a small, ocean-going town. It is a transatlantic liner which never leaves the dock. The attendants are taught boat-drill and fire-drill. Every year at least half a dozen people try to commit suicide from the Palace Pier, but they are never allowed to drown. It is an interesting sidelight that the shock of the cold water almost invariably causes them to yell for help and struggle to save themselves. Only one has deliberately made an effort to jump in again when rescued, and he was a well-known journalist. I have dined with him twice since then, and he is as prosperous-looking as ever he was before he decided to do himself in.

The money which a pier makes is almost entirely in coppers. Every week these are collected in huge quantities, divided up into bags of sixty, and then into bags of 1,200 (£5) before being driven off in a van to the bank. Leaving the automatic machines until later, we come across a number of astonishing figures. The number of people who dance out of doors on

the Palace Pier each night is more than a thousand and each of them pays 6d. for the privilege. Each week, too, over 7,000 meals are served. As these include tea, the average cost of each meal is in the neighbourhood of rs. 6d. Last year something like 200,000 people embarked and disembarked from the Palace Pier on their way to or from Calais, Boulogne, Trouville, Dieppe, Havre, and Cherbourg. In a case like that the pier is paid so much in the way of dues by the shipping companies involved. It is the same with yacht owners who like to tie up alongside. During the Brighton races Sir Wyndham Portal decided to lie alongside. The late Lord Inchcape did the same when he had to hurry back from France to get to the House of Lords and decided that this was a quicker route (by way of the *Southern Belle*) than by going to Southampton. Several of the sideshows on the pier are run by independent companies who pay concessions for their space.

I did not inquire what the firm which supplies rods and fishing tackle is charged. But one can imagine that it is a considerable annual sum. Nor was I offered the figure for the motor-boat concession. But the speed-boats which dash out from the Palace Pier will carry as many as 700 people on a fine day. To get down to brass tacks, however, a sideshow owned by the Palace Pier and known as the Spider Game earned no less than £224 in a single day in 1926. The Jockey scales weighing machine even to-day will take as much as £14 a day at twopence a time. Altogether there are 522 automatic machines on the pier. They can be divided into a number of categories—tests of strength, tests of skill, lures for the superstitious, and lures for the inquisitive.

It is a sign of the times that the many machines which purvey "naughtiness" in the form of abbreviated films such as "What Tommy saw in Paris," "Artists' Models," "The

Harem Girls at Play," "Beauty and the Bath," "Unveiled," have been scrapped. This is not the culmination, as you might suppose, of a series of attempts by Congregational ministers, members of the Church, and others to put an end to what they call suggestiveness. It is merely the result of the cold-blooded fact that young people nowadays are not interested in that kind of thing. They prefer to pull levers, punch punch-balls, and generally show their strength or skill at playing automatic golf, polo, hockey, cricket, soccer, or rugger. The Palace Pier being a private company, I repeat, it is impossible to give actual figures of the takings from these automatic machines. But it would not surprise me to learn that the average earnings of each are well over 1,200 pennies a day. If you multiply this by 522 an agreeable sum is reached—particularly agreeable when you realize that the takings are entirely net, except for the wages of the dozen mechanics who have to keep the machines in order and put matters right when a copper occasionally gets stuck in the intricate machinery. Every year fifteen or twenty new machines appear on the market. Some are apparently "winners," and they are launched like leading ladies by their manufacturers.

Banquets are given. The various pier proprietors are invited to Lucullan repasts at the Savoy Hotel and elsewhere. Sometimes they are a great success. Sometimes they are the reverse. The biggest money-maker in recent years has been the film of the seventh round between Jack Dempsey and Gene Tunney, when the latter was put down for the long count. That little film, which lasts less than a minute, has earned many thousands of pounds, not merely at Brighton but on the piers throughout Great Britain. These sidelines of spectacular entertainment are likely to be overlooked by the man in the street—and sometimes by the pugilist. The disgraceful performance of Jack Doyle in his fight against

Jack Petersen was so apparent that it never had any appeal as a pier-head attraction.

But piers do much more than provide automatic machines for the casual copper. The theatre on the Palace Pier holds 1,250 people and first-class London companies play there. It is the manager's proud boast that it has a larger and more up-to-date stage than any other in Brighton. This is certain. More than 130,000 people paid admission there last year. By contrast it costs £3,000 every three years to scrape the under-structure of the pier, and another £1,500 every two years to paint the superstructure. I should hate to think of the price of the insurance after being told that it would have cost at least £500,000 in 1933 to build a similar pier. After all, it is a third of a mile long and its farthest props go through 32 ft. of water into 14 ft. of chalk. This particular pier even employs a resident diver to do under-water work.

By contrast once more no fewer than 1,325 people went inside the bandstand at 3d. a head to listen to the Royal Horse Guards the last Sunday I was there, and another 1,000 people paid 2d. to sit in neighbouring deck-chairs. The open-air dancing which runs from Whitsun to the end of September averages a nightly attendance of yet another 1,000 people at 6d. a head, and I have said nothing about skeeball. This peculiar mixture of skittles and bowls never took less than £2,200 a year net profit before the slump, although there were only four "tables." Its popularity is attested by the patronage of such people as Carnera, Prince George, J. H. Thomas, Marshal Chang, George Robey, and the Mollisons.

So far too I have said nothing of the 3d. which is charged for each person who goes on to the pier. My mathematics will not permit me to work out in pounds, shillings, and pence the takings which result from the hundreds of thousands of people who go on this pier each year. I have no figures either for the numbers of people who spend 2d.

on sitting in deck-chairs, and no doubt the same deck-chair is used by half a dozen people on the same day. The more I think about it, in fact, the more I regret that the Palace Pier is a private company in which it is impossible to buy shares, and the less surprise I feel that this is so. I only wish some kind uncle of mine had built it for my own special benefit thirty-five years ago.

## CHAPTER XXIII

### MONEY FOR RACING

TO-DAY there are between 4,000 and 5,000 people who have registered their colours as race-horse owners under Jockey Club rules, and have anything from one to forty horses in training. Of these, less than two hundred owners show a profit on the year. It is evident, therefore, that anyone who enters the ranks of the owners ought to do so in the frame of mind in which he would buy a grouse moor or a yacht or a long stretch of fishing—with the certain knowledge, in fact, that it is bound to cost him a good deal for his pleasure. The distinction is, however, that racing can show a profit which gives you that little something extra which the others have not got. The Aga Khan, for example, has won as much as £73,000 in one year.

But what *does* racing cost? Well, I have been talking to a race-horse owner on a small scale and have learnt all about it. He became one three years ago and has owned six horses, and his career as an owner, though slightly above the average in way of luck, may be considered typical. Of course, if you are rich enough, you start by buying expensively bred colts to produce the basis of a stud. If they are successful as race-horses, so much the better, but it does not follow that because they are good on the course they are necessarily good at the stud. The reverse also holds good, and a bad horse in training costs just as much as a good one. This is between £4 and £5 a week. Of course, a good horse is entered for higher class races, and so the entrance fees and the forfeits are correspondingly more. On the other hand, also of course, he has more chance of winning larger stakes.

By contrast, the owner with no ideas of building up a stud, and who in consequence has only one or two race-horses, has a great deal of enjoyment, and if he is a gambler has the chance of winning money too. Supposing he buys only a couple of selling platers, he has even then quite a chance of making a nice profit. There have been several cases in recent years where a horse has been bought out of a selling-plate race for as much as 2,000 guineas, although it cost the original owner only a hundred or so. Cases in point are Corporal, bought by Mr. Horner, of the Jockey Club, for 2,000 guineas, and Paul Caret, bought by Mr. Washington Singer, also of the Jockey Club, for 1,800 guineas.

There are many examples of horses which have won high-class handicaps, and even classic races, which started very modestly as yearlings. A yearling can develop out of all recognition, and that is part of the fun. In the case of *Miracle*, which is owned by Lord Rosebery, this horse was bought for 150 guineas from Lord Beaverbrook as a yearling. As a two-year-old it won the Gimcrack Stakes; it won a valuable two-year-old race at Goodwood; and then won the Eclipse Stakes, which were worth about £12,000 that year.

The question of forfeits enters largely into the debit side of the owner's racing accounts. While it costs only £5 to enter an animal for the Derby it costs £25, £50, and even £100 at the later stages to take it out of the race. If an owner is fortunate enough to find that his horse has no chance he can scratch it in the very early stages.

But let us turn to the experience of Mr. R. L. Jolliffe, the owner of whom I have been speaking. One day he woke up with the decision to become a race-horse owner. He went to the Brighton Meeting and saw a horse called *Lion Heart* winning a race. It was by Gay Crusader, and he bought it for 180 guineas. He then went to Weatherby's in Cavendish Square to register his colours. This cost 5s. and a good

deal of trouble, for it is extremely difficult to find distinctive colours which have not been used. In his case he chose as his basis straw colour and then added a red cap. He was told that this was inclined to conflict with the Duke of Richmond's colours, so he added red-striped sleeves. It is obviously important that a new owner should not have colours that could ever be mistaken for those of existing owners, particularly great men like my Lords Derby, Rosebery, Lonsdale, and Ellesmere, not to mention Mr. J. B. Joel and Mr. J. A. Dewar.

In the meantime Mr. Jolliffe got hold of Victor Smythe, the trainer, and asked him if he would like to take charge of the horse. Smythe was delighted to do so, and Mr. Jolliffe's liability at once became £4 10s. a week for training expenses, plus a heath tax (for Smythe trains at Epsom, where a charge is made for the gallops). This amounted to £10 a year, as at Newmarket. The horse also had a few engagements which were taken over at the new owner's option.

The next business was to find a suitable race in view of the trainer's opinion of Lion Heart. It was decided to run him at the next meeting at Brighton, where he started second favourite to Lord Derby's veteran, Cap-a-pie. Lion Heart looked a winner all over and the new owner was naturally thrilled at the prospects, but while his horse was being shouted home by the expert race readers it suddenly pulled up lame and ended nearer last than first. As Lion Heart had not very good legs, Mr. Jolliffe decided to give him to his trainer as a present, for it did not seem worth while persevering with his new purchase. The trainer thought he had a great stroke of luck, but though he ran the horse all over the country for twelve months he finally gave him away at Carlisle to someone else.

You might have thought that this first experience would have been enough for the new owner, but once bitten, twice

as eager. Undiscouraged by Lion Heart's failure he bought the winner, Cap-a-pie, and though most people thought it was asking for trouble he kept the horse until the following season, winning three races and, in addition, being placed twice. The value of the stakes was £500. The price he bought it at was £375. He sold it ultimately for £75. I leave it to you to work out the loss and profit account. The cost of the horse had been £4 10s. a week for fourteen months. Add to that the travelling expenses for the horse, payments and presents to the jockeys, and the entrance fees. Subtract from that the occasional substantial wagers which proved successful.

We might now turn to the cost of jockeys and others intimately connected with the running of the race. A jockey is paid £3 for a mount. In addition, he will be paid a proportion of his travelling expenses if he is riding for other people, and the whole of his expenses if he is riding for you personally, and none at all if he is on the spot. The cost is naturally governed by the distance he has to come, and, incidentally, jockeys always charge first-class fares. If the jockey wins, he is entitled to £5 for the ride, but in addition he receives a recognized present from the owner. In arriving at this sum it is usual to give 10 per cent. of the stake, with a probable minimum of £25. Thus on a £500 race the jockey will receive £50, plus £5, plus a proportion of the travelling expenses. Gordon Richards was said publicly to have made £15,000 in 1933. He contradicted this, but one would not be far wrong if one assessed his earnings and presents last year at a total aggregate of £10,000.

With regard to this matter of presents, these are governed often by the result of the wager made, or the coup made by the owner. A coup can be defined in two ways. Either you place your bets so cleverly without disturbing the market that you reward yourself with a long-priced winner ; or you

discover you have a horse in a certain race which, with ordinary luck in running, ought to have so much weight in hand that you are encouraged to bet freely whatever the state of the market. Of course, coups can go wrong, and horses which are thought to have a stone in hand have been beaten.

One may add to the list of the owner's expenses another 10 per cent. of the stake, which the owner, by tradition, gives to the trainer. In addition, he will probably give a present to the head lad, and also to the lad who "does" the horse; so that in a small race where the stake is £150 there is not a great deal left.

Here are two pictures of a typical owner's good luck and bad luck. Mr. Jolliffe bought a yearling from the late Felix Leach for 250 guineas at the Doncaster sales. She was by Papyrus. She never saw a racecourse, it being discovered in training that she could not gallop at all. She was sold at Newmarket in the October sales for 25 guineas. To this depreciation must be added the £4 10s. a week for twelve months, as well as forfeits, including one of £50 for the Oaks.

Here is the other picture. Mr. Jolliffe bought a game little mare named Copra for 320 guineas, greatly against the advice of the owner. She has since won three races for him, including one at Epsom, and has been placed on various occasions. The owner would hate to say what he has made in bets, but Copra paid her purchase price in stakes several times over, and was so reliable in running that it was always possible to wager on her with confidence.

Owning horses is evidently a gamble. Look at April the Fifth, bred by MacGregor and sold as a yearling for a very modest sum. Before the Derby he was worth about £800 on the hoof. Three minutes later he was worth at least £20,000.

It might be interesting here to give a list of the average value of the various big races to the owner :

Derby, £9,700.

2,000 Guineas, £9,000—last year.

Oaks, £7,200.

The Eclipse Stakes, £11,000.

The Cambridgeshire, £1,800.

The Cesarewitch, £1,700.

The Lincoln, £1,500.

The 1,000 Guineas 1933, £8,600.

The St. Leger of last year, £11,000.

The successful jockeys in the Derby have sometimes got as much as £2,000 from grateful owners.

The Derby winner when he retires to stud gets £300 per mare even now. It used to be as much as £400 or more. The horse usually retires to stud at the age of four or five and earns for its owner about £6,000 for the first year or two, mounting up to as much as £12,000 when he is eight years old. He will continue at stud if all goes well until he is eighteen or nineteen. It is true that the Government takes more than 50 per cent. in tax from these stud fees, but it remains a wonderful gold mine.

Of course the intelligent owner does not harbour any expectations of becoming a Derby winner even though hope springs astonishingly eternal. All he hopes for is the glory of winning a race; of being able to say to his friends, "I told you so"; the thrill of seeing his colours going up to the post; and then, if he is lucky, of seeing them run prominently in the race. It is noticeable that he receives no compensation when his horse loses, except a decrease in the number of his friends. But that is life, isn't it?

## CHAPTER XXIV

### PAYMENT FOR MEN

OTHER people's money is always a fascinating subject, and particularly so when such other people are known to one by name and sight—professional athletes, for instance. The money they earn varies enormously, according to the form of sport they have taken up. Alec James, the world's finest footballer, for example, earns only £10 a week, although his actual drawing power makes him worth at least £20,000 a year.

But let us start with scullers. They are probably the worst paid professional athletes in the world. Even the champion of the universe is not certain to get a fixed retainer. What he has to do is to secure a backer to put up £500, let us say, for a match between him and some challenger. This may happen only once every year or so. He may not even find a backer and may have to put up the money himself, and then he may lose it all. There is no real way of charging a gate. The sculler, moreover, must be fitter than any other athlete in the world, including the prize-fighter. He cannot afford to loiter for a moment on the way, for the other man will be past him like a flash. He must be absolutely fit, and the chances are that all he can do between these occasional matches is to get a job as a boatman or, possibly, as an occasional coach.

At the other end of the scale is the heavyweight boxer. Even though he barely scales thirteen stone, Jack Petersen was paid £5,000 for four minutes or so in his fight against Jack Doyle in 1933. Petersen, moreover, had had only about twenty fights or so, and yet he was able to command that

sum of money. It is on record that Tunney collected £400,000 from his two fights with Jack Dempsey. That is the record, in fact.

The remarkable thing about prize-fighting is that the income of the successful pugilist increases by geometrical progression. Take the case of McCorkindale. McCorkindale was to be paid £30 to fight a German novice in 1932. Then at the last minute he was put on in the main bout against Gains, and was paid an extra £90. For the return fight McCorkindale was able to command £1,500; and so it goes. Kid Lewis earned a little more than £60,000 during his long career. Jimmy Wilde's first purse in London was thirty shillings. For his fight against Pal Moore he was paid £8,600, which is the highest money ever paid to a little man.

As I have said in the previous chapter, jockeys are given £3 for each ride. They get an extra £2 if they win, and on top of that it is customary to give them 10 per cent. of the stakes. In contrast to this, handicappers of the Jockey Club are usually paid thirty-five guineas for two days' racing of three hours per day, and five guineas extra for each extra race. Thus, Ascot would be worth about a hundred guineas to the handicapper. Few of them make more than £800 a year, whereas Gordon Richards this year will have made more than ten thousand pounds.

Bob Harlow, Walter Hagen's manager, recently gave me some interesting statistics about the money paid to golf professionals. Hagen was paid the highest sum of money for a thirty-six hole match in America and also in England. In 1926 he was paid \$8,600 (£1,720 at par) to play Bobby Jones in Florida, and he beat him by twelve and eleven. Four years ago he was paid £500 for thirty-six holes against Archie Compston, and was defeated by eighteen up and seventeen to play. In his best year he has made as much as £15,000. Last year in May he played in exhibition matches every day except

five. For these he received \$2,600 (£520 at par). During the Florida boom he was paid \$30,000 (£6,000) a year just to be the "president" of the Pasadena Golf Club during December, January, February, and March.

The highest salary ever paid to a professional in England was paid by the late Lord Northcliffe to Abe Mitchell, who received £2,000 a year as the professional at North Foreland. On top of that Abe must have made at least another thousand a year out of the sale of golf balls and golf clubs. The highest paid English golf professional is George Duncan, who is paid £1,000 a year and expenses by the Aga Khan as his private professional. The average golf professional gets a retainer of £200 a year at the outside, and is lucky to earn £600 a year apart from any big money prizes.

Professional Rugby League footballers have a tough time. The motto is, "No play, no pay." They are paid thirty shillings a match and another ten shillings if they win. The International Team which went to play in Australia received ten shillings a week pocket-money and that was all, apart from their actual expenses.

Professional Association footballers are paid at the rate of £8 a week, with an extra £1 if the team draws the match, and £2 if it wins. So the most brilliant professional cannot earn more than £500 a year, especially as during the summer months he gets only his retainer of £8 a week. This must be particularly riling to first-class players who find that they have been transferred from one club to another for £15,000 or so; but the Football Association has a motto that the game is greater than the player, which is bad luck on the player.

The footballer who plays for his country receives either £6 or a medal. Usually the medal is chosen. When it is realized that perhaps 135,000 people are watching the England v. Scotland match, this seems very pathetic pay. The team chosen to play against Italy last spring received ten shillings

a day for their out-of-pocket expenses, £6 for the match in Rome, and another £6 for the match against Switzerland.

Cricket professionals are paid £20 a week during the season, but they have to pay all their own expenses. On top of that they may get what is known as talent money, but it depends on the individual county as to how much they get for a certain number of wickets or a century of runs. The men selected for the Test Team Matches in Australia have all their expenses paid, of course, and may earn another £200 or so during the winter months out in Australia. They receive, in addition, £20 for playing in a Test Match. There is always, however, the chance of a "benefit" match. The record is held by Kilner, of Yorkshire, who received no less than £5,000 from his benefit. Hirst got as much as £3,000. By contrast, Bill Lockwood, the Surrey fast bowler, did not get a penny, for it rained all three days and not a ball was bowled.

Professional squash-racquet players and racquet players are very low down in the scale of income. Even the champions are lucky if they earn £5 a week. This, of course, is due to the fact that the very nature of the game precludes large gate receipts.

Lawn-tennis professionals in England also receive minute incomes, although in America the leading amateurs are said to have been paid lump sums of £20,000 and more to give up their amateur status, and, in addition, receive a proportion of the gate money. I never discovered exactly what Mr. Cochran paid Suzanne Lenglen to turn professional, but that also did run into some thousands, I presume. She, however, was the exception to the rule of low payment for professional lawn-tennis in this country.

We are left now with professional bowls players, professional anglers, professional billiards players, and professional wrestlers. There are also professional Knur and Spel players.

In 1919 and 1920 when billiards was booming, Melbourne Inman made £3,000 a year. He and the other professionals were subsidized by billiard-table makers and received a share of the gate. To-day one of his greatest friends tells me that Inman is lucky if he makes six or seven hundred a year. Even Lindrum does not probably make more than £1,000 a year.

Knur and Spel is a miner's game, and the bet is usually £5 a side. There have to be a lot of five-pound notes to produce a pleasant income. Professional wrestlers in America wrestle two or three times a week, and in the case of Strangler Lewis and Sonenberg, as much as £40,000 a year is made in sums of £300 and £400 a time. The pay in this country is proportionately less—about one-tenth or one-fifteenth for the best of them.

The professional bowls players in Lancashire can back themselves to win as much as £3,000 in the Blackpool bowling handicap, which is the great event of the year. For the rest of the year, during the summer season, they take part in matches almost every night of the week on the bowling greens at the back of public-houses. The usual admission is sixpence, and their share of the gate may amount to as much as £10 per match.

Professional anglers are likely to earn very little money except what they can make backing themselves at remarkably long odds, such as £150 to ten shillings, at the various angling festivals.

There is no baseball worth mentioning in England, and so the £14,000 a year that Babe Ruth still earns in America has no parallel of any kind over here. Which reminds me, finally, of the professional league cricketer. He is paid according to his contract, which varies a great deal with the individual man. Constantine, for example, is paid £50 a match, which is by far the highest pay.

If the heavyweight is the most overpaid athlete in the

world, the dance-orchestra leader is the most overpaid professional man. Ambrose himself said to me once, "Not only are we the most overpaid, but we are also the most ignorant earners of big money in the country." Ambrose admits to paying super-tax of several thousands a year.

It is estimated that Jack Payne and Jack Hylton both earn more than £28,000 a year themselves, quite apart from what they pay their bands. There are many trumpeters and saxophonists who earn as much as £80 a week all the year round. This is in contrast to the Prime Minister's salary of £5,000 a year, and that of a High Court Judge's, which has been cut still further.

Among the highest paid professional men in England are the cartoonists. Strube, of the *Daily Express*, Tom Webster, of the *Daily Mail*, and Low, of the *Evening Standard*, are all said to earn £10,000 a year. By contrast again, the late editor of the *Daily Express* got £7,500 a year, which is the top price for editors to-day. A former editor of an evening newspaper was said to have received £25,000 a year with bonuses, but that is a figure of the past. Lord Ashfield was paid £30,000 a year as the head of the Underground and Omnibus combine, but this was reduced to £12,000 a year, and he was compensated with a lump sum when the London Passenger Transport Board was formed.

Best-selling books do not receive anything like so much money as they are popularly supposed to do. There are not more than two or three novelists who are paid more than £2,000 in advance for a book. The largest publisher's cheque ever seen by another publisher, who is a friend of mine, was the half-yearly cheque of £16,000 paid some three or four years ago to the late John Galsworthy. Famous artists are also feeling the draught. There are only two or three who get more than £1,000 for a portrait, and not more than twenty who get more than £500. There is an ear, nose,

and throat specialist who gets a steady £40,000 a year out of his job. There are three or four K.C.s who earn a similar amount. The average barrister is lucky if he makes £800 a year.

What is the easiest way of all of making money? Well, have you ever tried buying half-shares in Irish Sweep tickets?

## CHAPTER XXV

### ALL ABOUT BROOKLANDS

INTEREST in speed-motoring increases every year. In 1933, despite the slump, there were more entries than in 1932, and 1934 showed a further increase. It is particularly interesting in view of the fact that private flying might have been expected to take away the allegiance of just those rich and daring young men and women who have hitherto been identified with track driving. Nothing of the sort has occurred. Apparently the sports—if one can call them such—demand totally different mentalities. With the exception of those dually-controlled experts, John Cobb, Whitney Straight, Brian Lewis, and Kaye Don, who are pilots as well as ace drivers, the civilian flyers consider speed-motorists to be just as hare-brained as the speed-motorists reckon the civilian flyers. These feelings are easily assessed at Brooklands, where there is an aerodrome as well as a racing-track.

What the general public does not know is that Brooklands is controlled by a white-haired widow who, as governing director of the Brooklands Estate Company, takes an unusually active interest in the organization. Mrs. Locke King, though she is approaching the seventies, drives her own car and could walk most middle-aged men off their feet. She is a practical farmer too. And yet she was the first person to complete the circuit of Brooklands track—on July 6, 1907. I have not the space to tell of the building of the track (which cost £150,000), nor of the fiasco of the opening meeting. It is 2 miles long, enclosing an area of about 350 acres. It is 100 ft. wide, and at certain points the banking is 28 ft. high.

Every year at least £2,000 is spent during the winter months in repairing the track, and in 1933 the repairs reached a total of £3,000.

Every year certain representative drivers are picked out, and a plan of the track is sent them with a request to indicate by an X those places which are thought to cause the worst bumps. The replies are then analysed and the track surveyor goes out with a theodolite. Frequently the spot marked X is some hundreds of yards out; but it is very difficult even with a theodolite to track them down. In 1933 far and away the worst bump which was taken out under the members' bridge involved a depression which reached a maximum depth of only 3 in. in 20 ft. When the spot has been discovered it is no good trying to plaster it. It would be as silly as to try to put in a new bit of wood over a defective floor-board instead of putting in an entirely new one. What happens is that the panels of concrete sink bodily or tilt (in each case very slightly), for surface disintegration hardly matters at all. It is necessary, therefore, to go right down to mother earth and to put in an entirely new panel of concrete. Sometimes when the bad spot occurs at the top of the banking it is very difficult. Wheel-barrows have to be pulled up by windlasses to the top, and the concrete has to be almost bone-dry; otherwise it would bulge owing to its own weight, rather like a custard-pie which has been put in at a slant.

How expensive is it to own and drive a racing car? Well, it evidently depends on the type of car, and also the race or races for which you enter. Mr. John Cobb's gigantic motor-car can do only five miles to the gallon, at 1s. 6d. a gallon. If he entered for a 500-mile race (the entry fee for which is £15 or £16) he would probably spend £10 5s. merely on petrol for practising and the race itself. In addition to that it must be remembered that last year, at any rate, new tyres had to be substituted every 120 miles at £10 a tyre. That

comes, all told, to nearly £200 or more. Actually, I should suppose that his running costs last year would have amounted to four figures quite easily. If he had had a bad smash, it would have come to a great deal more. The car in the first instance must have cost something over £6,000. At the other end of the scale you have the sporting undergraduate who bought a Baby Austin for £5 and raced it enjoyably, if not successfully, throughout the season.

The question of mechanics is not an easy one to answer. There again it depends on whether you are taken care of by a motor-car firm which supplies its own mechanics for you, or whether you put yourself and your car in the hands of a firm like Thompson & Taylor at Brooklands, who will garage your little darling at so much a week, and charge you for various nuts, bolts, and service, according to a time-sheet, like any service station.

The difference in the care with which individual racing drivers treat their motor-cars is so enormous that it has been found impossible by this firm to have a standard tariff. There is a charge of £1 a month for garaging a car during the eight months' season, but this is deducted if any work is done on the car. The cost will range between £50 and £200, according to luck and good management. Thompson & Taylor supply mechanics for you at a rate per hour which will work out at something like £1 a day. Some drivers, as I say, abuse their cars terribly. Others do not, and save themselves some hundreds a year thereby.

What are the rewards? The biggest prize-money at Brooklands is £400, provided by Lord Nuffield, formerly Sir William Morris. This is the British Empire Trophy race, with £200 for the second place, another £100 for the third place, another £100 for the entrant of the car covering distance in the shortest time, and £50 for the car placed first in each class.

It is interesting, by the way, to see that a sumptuary law has been passed by the Brooklands management. It is this : The clerk of the course may prohibit any driver, mechanic, or car from competing, the appearance of whom or which is unreasonably or habitually dirty or untidy.

The lucky owner of a winning car can also make money out of bonuses supplied by the manufacturers of various parts of the motor-car, as well as the purveyors of petrol and oil. These bonuses have decreased considerably, however, in recent years, and I doubt very much whether the winner of a small sprint race would make much more than a fiver. Some years ago rewards were considerable, particularly for the bigger races. The Marquis de Casa Maury told me that it was worth £1,500 to him to win the Spanish Grand Prix ten years ago, and that to win the chief race in America was worth something like £12,000. There is no official difference between an amateur and a professional track driver as far as I can work out. It would be too difficult to differentiate between the assistance that a driver would be compelled to have, and the assistance that might be given him over and above the minimum. It is certain, however, that to make any attempt to ensure your winning a race even occasionally, it is necessary to enter your name and your car for a number of races which you have no chance of winning, so as to get a possible handicap, in the same way that a racehorse is entered for races which it is unlikely to win.

The question of handicapping is a piquant one. There are at least seven men drivers and four women drivers whose skill has to be taken into account in addition to the type and speed of the motor-car which they are driving. The first of them is Mr. John Cobb, who is a fur-broker by profession. He is over forty years old ; tall, broad, clean-shaven, quiet, and easy to handle from the point of view of Brooklands. Primarily he is an outside track driver as opposed to Whitney

Straight, the ex-Cambridge undergraduate, who shines particularly on the Mountain circuit, which is characterized by acute turns. Mr. Whitney Straight wears decorative clothes and longish hair. He speaks with almost a lisp. When still an undergraduate he used to fly down in his own aeroplane before taking part in the races. Then he took a three-year lease of P. G. Wodehouse's house in Norfolk Street, Park Lane. He is a meek-and-mild-looking youth. You would never think that he was a daring driver who has actually gone round the Mountain circuit faster than anybody else alive.

Oliver Bertram, recently down from Cambridge, drives John Cobb's old Delage. He is fairly tall, fair-haired, moustached, and very quiet. He is an outside circuit man. There is no need to describe Sir Malcolm Campbell. Kaye Don needs no introduction. The sixth driver whose skill is taken into consideration by the handicappers is Brian Lewis, the son of Lord Essendon. His record, too, is too well known to recapitulate. There is finally Mr. George Eyston, a tall, pale-faced, spectacled young man who drives like a fury and looks like an essayist. It is a fact that the daring and brilliance of these seven men are considered worth at least five miles an hour to the car, their skill largely involving the knowledge of the exact point and method of getting on and off the Home banking and the Byfleet banking.

All the women drivers are coming on fast. The best of the women drivers is Mrs. Katherine Petre. She is small, vivacious, and pretty. She drives a Bugatti, and always gives a grand display of handling her car in a 700-yards race when the speed of getting away and skill in changing gear were at a premium. Many big drivers lose heavily by the slowness with which they get off as the flag falls. Next we have Mrs. Wisdom, who drives a bigger car than any other woman—a Leyland-Thomas. She is exceedingly slim, on the tall side, and has a great deal of style.

Miss Fay Taylour, the third on my list, was formerly a dirt-track driver. The fourth woman whom the handicappers regard as being in the top class is Mrs. Tolhurst. She drives a Riley, and is very good looking. It is curious, indeed, how good looks and speed-racing seem to go together. If you go to Brooklands I will wager that you will see a prettier collection of girls than anywhere else in the country. The stage in particular seems to make more alliances with the track world nowadays than it does even with the turf or the peerage. Pretty mannequins also are very much in evidence at these meetings.

All told, there are about 200 racing cars which compete in the eighteen meetings. I say nothing of the motor-bicycle races or the pedal-bicycle events. In the past four years there have been only six fatal accidents, which goes to show that racing at Brooklands is less dangerous than steeplechasing. Look at Cheltenham's record alone in the latter category. There have been, however, many extraordinary accidents in which nobody has been seriously hurt. There is actually an exclusive society of motorists who landed in the sewage farm from the track. Accidents have occurred all over the place. Lord Ridley went through a corrugated-iron fence, cut a tree in half, which was 8 in. in diameter, and only hurt his foot. Captain Fraser Nash went through a corrugated-iron fence at 100 m.p.h., and only bruised himself. Not so long ago George Duller's brother, in coming off the Home banking at 120 m.p.h., snapped off a telegraph pole as though it were a carrot. The car turned over several times, but the driver landed on a mud bank and walked back smoking the inevitable cigarette. Another young man came off the Home banking at high speed and, believe it or not, his car landed on all four wheels on the road twenty feet below. The wheels collapsed, and that was that. He was scarcely shaken.

It is a hitherto unexplained fact that in nearly every case of an accident occurring at high speed the driver loses his shoes or boots. Whether it has something to do with centrifugal force, or whether they get caught in the falls, I do not know. One expert says that in the case of motor-bicycle racing the faster you go the less likely you are to hurt yourself if an accident occurs. His theory is that you slither rather than thud on the prepared surface. On the other hand, in motor-bicycle races the driver parts company immediately with his machine, which, unfortunately, does not happen with motor-cars. What is a further misfortune is that a motor-car accident is nearly always attended by a fire. In consequence, Brooklands have now bought a Bentley fire-tender which is the fastest in the world. In any event there are always one or two ambulances and several doctors in attendance.

What you notice most nowadays about racing at Brooklands is not so much the increased speed of the cars (for as long ago as 1908 Nazzarro attained a speed at some moments of between 120 and 125 m.p.h. at Brooklands), but the decreased size of the motor-cars which attain high speeds. It was not so long ago when anything under 90 h.p. was not considered to have a chance. To-day—well, look at the Baby Austins, for example. Who will ever forget Count Zborowski's Chitty Bang Bang? It was the most enormous affair, and made still more noticeable by the black shirts and caps with their incredible checks worn by the Count and his team. It is noticeable, too, that nowadays there are far fewer examples of motorists entering their cars in their own names but getting someone else to drive them.

To-day there are forty racing drivers who have achieved an average of 120 m.p.h. over a lap at Brooklands. The highest speed ever recorded was 143.67 m.p.h. for 1 kilometre by Mr. John Cobb. Mrs. E. M. Thomas's 114 m.p.h., achieved six years ago, still stands as the fastest speed of a race won by

a woman, though Mrs. Wisdom reached a speed of 121 m.p.h. in her Leyland-Thomas two years ago in a flying lap.

Even when there is no racing, the track is being used. Each week there are at least thirty members of the Brooklands Club or members of the public (who pay 10s. for the privilege of doing so) trying out their cars. All told, there are about 1,300 members, with the Prince of Wales as a patron. Any of them will be there on race-days, and so will the book-makers. There are twenty or thirty of them in the public enclosures, and a dozen or so in the paddock. The odds are rather more cramped than on a racecourse. You seldom get more than ten to one. At the same time, they are always ready to do business with you.

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## CHAPTER XXVI

### THE DOGS

IN the whole history of sport no parallel can be found to the success of greyhound racing. In the brief period of seven years it has become a national habit, like drinking beer. There are over forty licensed race-tracks in this country at which the attendance since January will have mounted to more than 20,000,000 by the end of the year. £6,000,000 is invested in it. The shares have paid steady dividends throughout the slump and have appreciated by nearly 100 per cent., with the result that serious investors are taking a keen interest in them.

Perhaps the point which pleases the heads of the industry most is that the King's two aunts, Princess Marie Louise and Princess Helena Victoria, patronized the White City and even had a 2s. flutter on the Tote. It may sound snobbish, but it put the finishing touch to the respectability of greyhound racing—and even people with short memories can recall the not far distant days when every kind of story was current about the crookedness of greyhound racing. It was said that the dogs were doped, that their paws were rubbed with sandpaper to make them sore, that the bookmakers were in league with the promoters; every calumny was levelled against the sport. Lord Lonsdale inveighed against it. So did almost everyone connected with horse racing and coursing. And yet, so it has turned out, you might just as well have tried to deflate a Zeppelin with a knitting needle as attempt to kill its popularity.

The origin of greyhound racing in this country as we know it to-day was a meeting between General Critchley and Mr.

Charlie Munn, an American sportsman, at a country house-party given by Colonel Spender Clay at his place, Ford Manor, near Lingfield, in the spring of 1925. At that time General Critchley's interests were solely with the cement business, but he was pleasantly intrigued by the photographs shown him of the "tin rabbit" races organized by Mr. O. P. Smith, an Oklahoma farmer, which followed the latter's arrest for coursing rabbits on a Sunday. Mr. Munn explained the details, pointed out that every spectator could see the race from start to finish—unlike horse races—and wound up by saying that he could get no support for launching the idea over here.

That evening General Critchley's valet borrowed £4 from him to pay his bookmaker. Let General Critchley take up the story himself.

"That decided me," he said. "Here was my servant losing all that money on horses he had never seen. Why shouldn't we bring to his backyard something on which he could bet? My experience in the War had taught me a great deal about the rank and file and the general psychology of the Tommy. I knew that all Englishmen like a bet, so that if I could provide 'em with a new medium for a gamble, satisfying them that they would be getting a straight run for their money, and arrange that it should take place at a time of day when they had nothing to do, then success was certain. So I looked into it.

"The first thing I learnt was that there had been a kind of greyhound racing at the Welsh Harp in 1867, in which a mechanical lure had been employed. These words are important, as they formed the basis of the patents which I thought I was going to buy in their entirety, only to discover later on that the patents were so old that they had automatically lapsed. The Welsh Harp experiment, however, was a complete failure, for a very simple reason. The races, which were over 400 yards, were run in a straight line.

"Now, you probably do not know it, but the form of greyhounds is so astonishingly regular that if ever a greyhound is half a second slower or quicker than his normal speed over 500 yards we have the trainer on the mat, and he has got to explain the reason why. The variance in speeds that you have in present-day greyhound racing is entirely due to the oval shape of the racecourse, with the result that there is bound to be bumping and boring at the turns, and the more intelligent greyhounds—Mick the Miller was the great example of this—win as much by their intelligence in negotiating the bends as by their speed in the straight.

"Between 1867 and 1922, when Mr. O. P. Smith thought over his sins in the 'cooler,' and afterwards looked over the patents of mechanical lure, there was a complete gap in the records of greyhound racing. So it seemed safe to start on our own. With a good deal of difficulty, Charlie Munn and I raised £14,000, of which the majority came from the United States. We then decided on Manchester as the scene of our start, owing to the local interest in whippets and coursing. By October, 1925, the £14,000 had gone, and I had to go to my bank and borrow £5,000. That went too. However, my bank manager was a good sport, and he let me have another £5,000. But by that time, the more I saw of greyhound racing the better I liked its prospects. I must admit that we expected at least a crowd of 10,000 people on the first night, by virtue of watching the trials day after day, but, in fact, we had only 2,100. On the second night it dropped to 1,600. Things were serious. We fired the band. We cut our programmes to ribbons and feared the worst. For no good reason, though, the attendance went to 4,000 that evening, and then for thirty-three consecutive meetings of three nights a week we averaged 11,000 people.

"Incidentally, Charlie Cranston was the name of the dog which won the first greyhound race in this country. He lies

in an honoured grave on the Bellevue track at Manchester. He also won the first race at the White City later on, and was the first of the intelligent greyhounds to race with his head, waiting for a gap at the corners and winning by his intelligence. Mick the Miller and the present greyhound Derby winner, Wild Woolley, are his successors, but I am getting ahead too fast."

General Critchley then told me that he and his partners decided at this stage that they ought to shut down for a time and, in fact, have a close season like flat racing. Besides, he realized he was on a very good thing and wanted time to look into the possibilities of starting the sport in London. He first inspected the White City with its vast stadium built to hold a hundred thousand spectators for the Olympic Games of 1908. It looked like a vast barracks, but nevertheless negotiations were opened. No agreement could be reached, so General Critchley "snooped around" elsewhere and finally came upon the Underground Railway's refuse dump at Finsbury Park. Four times he went and looked at it. It seemed impossible to visualize it as a race-track. Eventually he decided to buy it, and almost immediately the White City landlords came to terms.

Fortunately, it was now very easy to raise money for greyhound racing, although the patents had lapsed, and the conversion of the two places began at once. The White City track, estimated to cost £10,000, ultimately cost £85,000, while the other, now known as the Harringay track, cost £110,000, though the original estimate was £35,000. But the gamble, if you can call it one, was successful. From the first night of the White City—June 21, 1927—an average of 50,000 people paid admission three nights a week for forty consecutive race-nights. That must be unequalled in the history of entertainment, culminating as it did in a crowd of 87,000 people on the occasion of the first greyhound Derby.

Meantime, General Critchley and his representatives were busy negotiating for sites in Birmingham, Leeds, and Edinburgh. This, as can be imagined, was a wearying business with tiresome local councils who were urged by interested parties to take the view that greyhound racing was demoralizing to the working classes, and the automatic difficulty of finding a wide space sufficiently near the heart of things to make it easily accessible. Meantime, too, greyhound stewards had been appointed in the persons of Lord Westmorland, Sir Humphrey de Trafford, and Lord Chesham to inquire into any questions that arose, on the lines of the Jockey Club.

Unfortunately for General Critchley, but happily for his rivals who were starting to spring up everywhere, these three sportsmen took the view that greyhound racing should be treated purely as a summer sport, with the result that the White City and Harringay closed down in the October, and the promoters of the Clapton and Wembley tracks were able to get comfortably started without any opposition. The immediate success of these ventures naturally caused every sports organizer in the country to follow suit in the spring of 1928. Some of these petty promoters were undoubtedly dishonest, and their malpractices brought the whole sport into disfavour.

"Yes," said General Critchley reminiscently, "those were black times. We had upset certain trade interests, and they did everything to sling mud at us. All my own organization could do was to turn its back to the storm and wait until it blew over. How it did so is proved best by these figures.

"In 1928 5,000,000 people paid admission on all courses. This number rose to 13,000,000 in 1929, to 15,000,000 in 1930, to 20,000,000 in 1932, and it has increased ever since. During that period more than £1,000,000 have been paid out in prize-money. Another £1,000,000 have been paid to the Exchequer in the form of entertainment tax, and so on. The

number of actual employees has risen to 20,000, while you can add another 80,000 who are indirectly employed.

"Most interesting of all for those people who are interested purely in the dogs as dogs instead of as a medium of sport and wagers, the number registered in the National Greyhound Studbook has increased from 2,700 in 1927 to nearly forty thousand last year. But what we are still most pleased about was the performance of Juvenile Jockey in the 1931 Lonsdale Plate. For Juvenile Jockey was an ordinary racing greyhound belonging to one of the track owners, and was sent to compete in the most casual style. A wire was sent to a local trainer in Carlisle to take charge of the dog. It was put in a train, handed over to the guard, and then proceeded to defeat all the much-fancied coursing greyhounds and win the coveted trophy."

For those of you who have never been to the dogs I had better explain that the races are run over distances of 500, 550, 625, and 700 yards. The average time for the first is anything between 29 and 33 seconds; for the second 30 to 33; for the third 37 to 39, and for the fourth 41 to 44. The immediate comment is that the race is over in a very short time compared with horse racing. The immediate reply is that you see very much more in 30 seconds of greyhound racing than you do in the whole of the Derby and most other horse races. In the latter the horses disappear for minutes at a time. In greyhound racing you have a consecutive view from start to finish.

Another advantage is that it often takes an expert to distinguish the colours of the leading three or four horses as the race is being run. In greyhound racing the dogs wear coatees, known as sheets, of either blue, orange, black, or some other colour which you cannot fail to recognize. There is also the additional advantage—according to cynics—of there being no jockeys and no possibility of pulling. Quite

true, some dogs get canny and slow up. Very occasionally they attack each other. But these minor disadvantages are quite outweighed by the other considerations, which include the fact that, even though there are only six runners in a greyhound race as opposed to a horse race, it by no means follows that the favourite is odds-on.

Having imbibed all this information, it seemed high time that I should go to the White City and see what it was all about. Many writers have given descriptive accounts of the scene, but I was not at all prepared for it. From General Critchley and Colonel Cameron downwards, it was all done in a very military and efficient way, with buglers, white uniforms, and a parade of the dogs before each race. My party sat in the club enclosure that was as luxurious as any casino hotel, dining off melon, turtle soup, lobster, and chicken pie, while we saw the races run every quarter of an hour under our very noses only 40 yards away.

The yelping of the greyhounds in their traps as they heard the electrical hare approach; the wave of shouting as the dogs shot round the green oval track; the genuine thrill of seeing them cornering at a far higher speed than any dirt-track rider and then shooting forward again at what seemed an incredible pace; and, finally, the luxury, orderliness, cleanliness, and lack of friction which attended our arrival, stay, and departure impressed me immensely.

There is no doubt about it, greyhound racing has come to stay, and in the next year or two it will have climbed the social scale just as effectively as the cinema, which less than ten years ago was still considered a servant girl's entertainment and a good deal lower than the cheapest music-halls.

The reasons why it has already succeeded are several—quite apart from the fact that it is such an excellent medium for the Englishman's love of a gamble. It is very much more accessible than horse racing, thanks to an eighteenth-century

law which forbids horse racing within 10 miles of Charing Cross. It is run with extreme precision. It is a very pretty sight, particularly the hurdle racing. And it gives its public something to do in the evening as a change from pub-crawling or going to the pictures or listening to the radio on the other nights of the week.

In future I prophesy its appeal will become much wider as soon as intelligent breeding from the more intelligent dogs produces still greater head-work in future greyhounds. At Stoke in Staffordshire the Greyhound Racing Association has a couple of hundred puppies. The sport being still so young, it has not yet been possible to check up on the result of mating chosen animals. Greyhounds do not race before they are eighteen months old, and their best performances are when they are three years old. The question that arises is whether a pup by Mick the Miller, who was really responsible for putting greyhound racing on the map, will inherit any of his father's intelligence in cutting through at the exact moment, having previously, while in the trap, wasted none of his energy in yelping before the race begins.

Many authentic stories are told of Mick the Miller. He was the most attractive dog ever seen in this country. When he was led round before the race he would wag his tail furiously when the crowd cheered him. If by any chance there was an empty section in one of the stands and the applause was less, he positively failed to wag his tail. He loved racing for its own sake, and when he had reached the finishing-post he slowed up at once. He knew the race was over and that the hare had nothing to do with it.

From what I can gather, greyhounds have much more character and more mannerisms than race-horses. My good friend Archie Compston, I am sure, will not mind if I say that Wild Woolley, the Derby winner of 1932, became the Archie Compston of dog racing. Without being surly, Wild

Woolley, who on retirement can command a stud fee of £50, is a very grim and concentrated performer. He never wags his tail. He has his head down. If you wave a dead rabbit in front of him—an action that would drive any other greyhound into hysterics of excitement—he merely sneers and turns his head away.

All that breeders can say so far is that either a litter is good in its entirety or it is poor stuff. It is proved that a three-year-old is likely to run better than a two-year-old, and, on the whole, Irish greyhounds are faster and more rangy. Beyond that they cannot go, as yet.

In colour they may be brindle, black, red, fawn, blue (“mouse-coloured”), white, together with the various combinations.

The crowds never fancy a white dog. They think they are not so fast as the others. But there was one white dog who was always immensely popular. This was Dilly. He was tremendously fast over the hurdles—when he really cleared them. But he would fall as often as three times in a race. The public adored him because he was always at long odds, and he either won by lengths or was hopelessly last. Whether he won or lost, he was cheered, because he was a great comedian and really enjoyed his tumbles.

Mick the Miller was the prime favourite during his racing days, in the course of which he won nearly £14,000 in prize-money. This may seem a staggering sum of money, and yet a certain peeress who owns three moderately good dogs, bred by herself, makes a regular £1,200 a year out of them in prize-money, and they cost only £1 a week to keep.

If the opportunity arises, it is worth trying to get permission to see the kennels at Northaw, just outside London, where the 700 dogs which race at Harringay and the White City are kept. The estate covers 140 acres. There are twelve trainers, several of whom are ex-public schoolboys

glad to earn a thousand a year away from the usual stuffy office ; dozens of kennel lads, several of whom are ex-troopers from crack cavalry regiments, who have done their three years with the colours ; and the best dog-vet. in the country, all under the supervision of Colonel Cameron, who has been second-in-command to General Critchley in every possible unit and every capacity since 1908—a remarkable record of co-operation.

From Colonel Cameron I learnt that the usual mishaps which occur to greyhounds are cut pads, sweaty paws, sore webbing, an occasional displaced toe, broken toe-nails, and track leg, which is the canine equivalent of housemaid's knee and is caused by the strain on the near hind-leg of taking a bend at speed. Sometimes there is mental trouble. This does *not* mean that the dog gets hydrophobia. But it gets stale and turns its head at the critical moment to see how the others are doing and, of course, loses the race. It then has to be given a rest and possibly a spell of coursing.

Greyhounds are extremely temperamental. Thunder in the air may throw form out completely. It is on record that one dog actually died of nerves in a thunderstorm on the Bellevue track at Manchester. Wet grass can also make a big difference. Some dogs like heavy going, just like certain horses. When there has been very recent rain, it is often a good plan to back the favourite if it is drawn on the inside, because of the difficulty the others may have in negotiating a slippery bend. Statistics show that in ordinary circumstance the luck of the draw is a far less important factor in greyhound racing than in horse racing—compare the number of winners who draw the small numbers at Ascot with those who are drawn on the other side of the course.

Most handicappers of greyhound racing consider that a length is equivalent to .06 seconds. It must be noted that there is no weight-for-age handicapping, for the very good

reason that greyhounds never carry weight. The handicapping is done according to grades, which in turn is largely influenced by the stop-watch. On some tracks in the North, where there are still not enough greyhounds available for racing, they have a form of handicapping whereby certain traps are placed in advance of the others. But normally there is no handicapping at all. In place of it the racing manager grades the dogs according to previous performances, either in actual races or in trials.

Supposing, for example, I bought a greyhound with a view to running it at the White City, the procedure would be this : The dog would be put in the isolation kennels at Northaw for a fortnight ; it would then be registered at the National Greyhound Racing Club and an identity book made out, giving details right down to the colour of its toe-nails. The name of the trainer would then be suggested to me, and when he had the dog in good condition it would be given three trials on the track to estimate the grade in which it should be placed. Finally, it would be put into an actual race slightly above its class in order definitely to establish its form. From then onwards it would run as graded by the racing manager. If it turned out a real winner, it would not run almost every week like the average dog. Instead, it would be kept for the open races and the classics, which are the Derby, Oaks, Cesarewitch, Scurry Cup, Grand National, Laurels, and Wembley Gold Cup. It might win me thousands of pounds, and again, it might not.

The Editor of the *Daily Express* bought a half-share in a new dog which won in a canine common canter the first time out. Its name, suitably, was Empire Crusader, and it won on the night that the Empire Crusader candidate, Sir Ernest Petter, failed to win the St. George's by-election. Fortunately, he sold his half-interest to no other person than the redoubtable General Critchley ; I say fortunately, because, like the

defeated candidate at St. George's, it completely "pettered" out thereafter.

Roughly speaking, if a 35-lb. dog does its first 500-yards trial in 30.80 seconds you can feel pleased with yourself, because you can probably sell it on the hoof, or I should say on the paw, for a matter of £150. As to its diet, this consists of soup or meat, cabbages, leeks, onions, carrots, and barley, so palatable that the workmen employed at Northaw often ask for a dish of it. This is poured over toasted brown malted bread, and allowed to soak thereon with raw minced meat taken off the bone to give an additional impetus to the consumer's speed. A good deal, of course, depends on the trainer, who, three or four years ago, was usually an Irishman, before it was discovered that as a type the Irish were too grubby to employ, most of them having been trainers of coursing greyhounds for which they got a mere 50s. a week, with the attendant low standard of living.

To-day the trainers, the kennel boys, the grading, in fact everything to do with greyhound racing, is standardized and stabilized. There is the National Greyhound Racing Society to look after the business dilemmas of the various track syndicates. There is the National Greyhound Racing Club, which deals with their sporting problems. And over everything there is the final court of appeal known as the Control Board, with my Lords Loch and Askwith as the senior members.

Such, then, is greyhound racing to-day, developed from the brainwave of an Oklahoma farmer into a stabilized industry employing a hundred thousand people, backed by £6,000,000 of capital, and attended annually by something like 20,000,000 people. Hats off to the valet who borrowed £4 from General Critchley in the spring of 1925 at Colonel Spender Clay's house-party at Ford Manor, Lingfield.

## CHAPTER XXVII

### A DEPARTMENTAL STORE

IT is hard to know where to begin one's account of a great departmental store, its size is so staggering, its wages bill is so colossal, and its staff is so tremendous. How would you like to control a force of anything from 6,000 to 7,000 men and women? By the law of averages at least one must get married every five days, and another must die every ten days. Resignations take a toll of one per working day all the year round, while necessary discharges involve a loss of two every three days. Think of the replacements—with each new-comer a comparative responsibility, even liability, until he or she have proved themselves. True, you can and must insure yourself against the bad faith of your employees just as you must insure your motor vans and lorries against accidents and third-party risks, and protect your store against damage by fire and water, not forgetting your ordinary employer's liability. That little item of insurance alone may set you back a neat £17,000 a year.

In one week before the January sales 1,150 girls have to be taught at the store how to be saleswomen. They have to learn that in account transactions they must use the sanction telephone for any order under £5, and go in person to the lower sanction office if it is more. They must learn about shopping cards, postage, double address, flimsies, labels, and all the rest of it.

The extraordinary thing about a great store is that there are at least two people in the background for each one you see. The wages bill in this particular establishment is more than £780,000 a year, which is half the total overhead of £1,560,000.

You can realize, therefore, that the firm has to take some millions a year to show a profit. On the first day of the sale in 1933 no less than £180,000 was taken, nearly £500,000 was taken in the week. Last year both figures have been exceeded.

Now let us start at the top of the list of the employees. We will set aside people in the managerial offices. Well, there are a hundred buyers and twenty departmental managers—groceries, furs, wines, and women's fashions being the four chief departments. You have one woman buyer for coats, four for gowns, one for costumes, two for millinery, one for corsets, one for stockings, and two for underwear. And so it goes. There is also a "fashion co-ordinator"—a woman who collects information about the trends of fashion and whose business it is to see that they are interpreted throughout the house, though not too far ahead.

Setting aside the other buyers, let us start at the beginning of things, because until you have bought something, obviously you cannot sell it. At the start of each year the buyers are asked for an estimate of their probable total sales for the next six months. This is vetted in the manager's office, and it is then decided from previous experience and from the amount of stock in hand, together with trade prospects generally, how much they should have in the way of purchasing power. This is allocated monthly, with further checkings up on the first of each month. The shoe buyer, for example, is given £25,000 to spend for the next six months. He goes to Northampton, Norwich, Kettering, Paris, Barcelona, Vienna, and one or two cities in Italy. At these various places he visits the firms he knows and learns about the others. Carrying his stock orders in his bag he knows just how much he has to buy, as well as the price, style, and colour for repeat orders. He is also looking all the time for new lines. After his visit to the Continent he will, if he can, get the latest fashions copied in

England. It is always an advantage to buy in this country. There is no exchange trouble. Telephone calls can be put in to hurry up manufacturers any minute. It is quite a mistaken idea, anyway, that buyers like to travel abroad.

After the buyer has made an end of his purchases, he returns to the store to write the final order. This is checked up and is then sent to the receiving-room to await the arrival of the goods. The order is once more checked—against the goods. The goods are ticketed and are passed into stock. In the shoe sale-room, incidentally, there are seventeen employees who sell, and thirteen who do not—an even higher proportion than usual of people behind the scenes compared with those who are visible.

Let us now presume that a pair of shoes is sold. If it is paid by cash that is the end of it. If it is an account order it must be sanctioned, which involves further processes upstairs, where there are 300 clerks on the sales ledgers making out accounts. Supposing the order is sanctioned, the pair of shoes is sent down the chute for despatch. This department has 540 people working in it, including 175 van drivers, 190 porters, 80 clerks, and 95 packers. Even that may not be the end of it. Supposing the shoes do not fit, or are returned because they are the wrong colour or size. The process is then reversed. The order is called for by the van. It is put in the returns room department. It then works back to the credit account, and so into stock.

That, in a nutshell, is the principle of a modern departmental store. It never occurs to one to realize how enormously heavy the cost of distribution must be, for overhead expenses include clerks, stock-keepers, packers, porters, model girls, the mail order department, an advertising staff, transport workers, and the administratives. In the counting-house alone there are 690 employees; 300, as I have said, are busy making out accounts; correspondence and letter-writing take up the

time of another 133; a similar number is employed with telephone orders and mail orders. There are 16 permanently in the returns room, and another 96 receiving the original goods from the makers.

Yes, a departmental store is just like a small town. When I tell you that this store covers a greater area than St. Paul's Cathedral, the Bank of England, and the Tower of London—in fact, a space in the County of London approximately equal to that of the London Docks—you will guess at once the store I visited. It has a quarter of a mile of ground-floor windows and more than 12,000,000 cub. ft. of actual trading space. This one store actually uses more electric light every year than the whole of the town of Folkestone. If that is not Big Business, nothing is. Over 10,000 meals a day are served for the staff alone, which involves a further 100 employees in the staff kitchens.

At any moment the goods in the store are worth between £900,000 and £1,000,000. Particularly interesting figures are those which refer to the annual turnover of individual items. Poultry, for example, "turns over" 187 times a year. When you make allowance for the fifty-two Sundays, you will realize how frequent this is. Meat "turns over" 103 times a year. Fruit does it 202 times a year. Fashions have a complete turnover every week. Pianos turn their stock every ten weeks.

There will always be a measure of "thrust and parry" between buyers and sellers, although the buyers do not make their purchases without advice from the sellers, and are further aided by the system of the wants slip. This is a slip on which everything is written down which has been asked for in the store that day and which is not in stock. A good deal of comedy is provided by this. Just as budding authors send their friends round asking booksellers for their latest book, so friends of the manufacturers of new lines go round in-

quiring for them, and expressing indignation if they are not available. Even ladies of title and generals are sometimes pressed into service in this way. There are various jokes about people who ask for white elephants and second-hand coffins, to test a store's ability to provide anything, but they are not founded on fact. But I like the story of the small boy, the son of a famous air ace, who wrote last term from his preparatory school at Seaford for an inexpensive but effective stink-bomb to throw at his French master.

In addition to the selling department there are various service sections such as those of theatre tickets and travel, neither of which is expected to pay its way. There is also the circulating library of 12,000 subscribers and 56 attendants.

We will now make a tour of the store with the general manager. As we make our way out of his offices he talks of the staff council. It is a body of fifty employees who meet once a fortnight in the winter and once a month in the summer. They are elected from various "constituencies"—in other words, departments. They organize whist drives. They discuss the welfare and improvement of the store. They go into the matter of overtime and general conditions. They are able as a body to pass on criticisms of superiors without getting the individual complainant into trouble. They also have certain privileges, such as signing their name when they enter the store in the morning instead of clocking in. They are, in fact, the staff M.P.s.

In our tour of the store we avoid as far as possible the sales rooms, and a series of factories (yes, I mean factories) are disclosed. There is, for example, the fur factory. Near by it are 200 girls busy on fashion garments. Then there is the silver factory, where silver-coating is done, where the engraving of your initials or crest is put on. There is a cardboard box factory, for in this store all the cardboard boxes are made on the premises. There is a boot-repairing factory with

ten or fifteen men hard at work all the time. There is a chocolate factory. There is a stamping factory, where letter-heads are put on by girls swivelling around what look like large dumb-bells. There is even a saddlery factory with nine men hard at work fixing trunks, and so on.

One of the most pleasant parts of this tour behind the scenes is the variety of pleasant odours, each confined to its own department. The keen scent of pine needles permeates the drug dispensary. Here a hundred prescriptions a day are made up, and nine tons of bath salts were manufactured in a week. Incidentally, all nine tons were sold in the same period. In the chocolate factory there is a delicious tang of toffee, as well as the pleasant odour of Easter eggs which are being made in January for the end of March. There is a grand odour of fresh Dundee cake in the bakery, and the admirable indefinable odour of the sherry and brandy in the wine cellars. Your mouth waters at the flavour of York hams in the grocery warehouse. Perhaps, best of all, is the smell of freshly roasted coffee a few yards away.

Though we walked steadily all over the building for two hours, I saw only the half of it. I missed, for example, the motor-repairing shop with its thirty employees. We passed by the department where the store makes its own soda-water, ginger-beer, and ginger-ale. I got only a glimpse of the refrigerating rooms, and the poultry department, and the fancy jewellery, but I was fascinated by the men making sausages, and had time to pat a golden retriever and an Aberdeen in the kennels which are set aside for the dogs of clients. This is quite a point, by the way. The management has no objection whatever to well-behaved dogs going round the store on a lead with their owners. It is the other clients who object. There is always the danger of a dog-fight, as well as of old ladies tripping over the lead. I also saw a huge incinerator in which all the refuse—heads of cauliflower,

squashed tomatoes, boxes, and the like—was being burned. I was told that it would cost the store £30 a week in cartage if it did not burn its own waste products.

Perhaps the most interesting place of all was the huge room where all the goods purchased, and which are not taken away by the clients personally, are assembled in bins and are later removed by trolley to the waiting motor vans. In one bin there were parcels of shoes, gloves, cutlery, brandy, sheets, and a child's suit. Each had its label, number, and pink flimsy attached. Thanks to the organization, all these goods had arrived by the chute from various parts of the enormous store and were there assembled for despatch within a few minutes of the client (who lived at Norwich) leaving the building. Another very interesting department was the receiving-room where the goods were arriving every minute from the manufacturers. The price tickets were being put on silk stockings, coat-hangers, books, corsets, golf-bags, handkerchiefs, and gloves.

During our walk we covered nearly a quarter of a mile of underground passages. Yes, it is astonishing how little one realizes the army of employees whom one never sees. Here is a list of some of them : Analysts, architects, artists, bakers, bedding and mattress makers, biscuit-makers, bootmakers and repairers, bookbinders, boxmakers, builders, cabinet-makers, carpet-planners, charcutiers, chocolate-makers, coachbuilders, cocoa-grinders, coffee-roasters, confectioners, corset-makers, costume and mantle makers, cycle and car repairers, decorators, designers of furnishings, die-stampers, dispensers, dressing-bag makers, dressmakers, electricians, electroplaters, embroiderers, engravers, feather-workers, furriers, jewellers, laceworkers, livery-tailors, makers of lingerie, makers of military equipment, manufacturing chemists, manufacturing perfumers, men's shirtmakers, milliners, mineral-water makers, opticians, piano repairers, posticheurs, printers, saddlers, sausage-

makers, signwriters, silversmiths and gilders, silver repairers, skirt repairers, skirtmakers, spirit-blenders, tailors (juvenile), tailors (naval, military, and civil), tea-blenders, trunk-makers, umbrella-makers, upholsterers, watch-makers, waterproofers.

Despite the existence of one of the finest sports grounds in the country, which requires the services of no fewer than eight gardeners and green-keepers, and the existence of dramatic societies, operatic societies, and all the rest of it, hundreds of the employees do not know one another even by name. Much of this is unavoidable if only because of their numbers. Some of it is amusingly deliberate.

## CHAPTER XXVIII

### BEHIND THE BARS

THE Zoological Gardens opened 107 years ago. In their century of existence they have received no aid from any public funds, and they have had to pay rent and rates just as if they were an institution run for private profit. Their income has been derived from two main sources—gate-money paid by the public, and the subscriptions of Fellows. Last year the subscriptions amounted to £21,000, and the admissions to about £58,000 if one includes the admissions to the aquarium, and also the admission fees of the Fellows. Other minor additions to the income include £2,600 for the ride receipts (elephants, camels, and so on), and £546 from the automatic feeding machines (largely for the sea-lions). These feeding machines have proved a great boon. Sea-lions eat an incredible amount of fish, and it was genius on the part of the authorities to let the public pay, and enjoy paying, to help to do it themselves. One notes with regret, however, the retirement on pension of the head sea-lion attendant. Old Bill must miss him.

One of the questions I have always wanted to put, and have at last succeeded in putting, is : Who gives the animals in the Zoo their names? The reply is that in two cases out of three the privilege is granted as a favour to the regular visitors, with the permission of the keepers. The remaining third are named by the keepers themselves. These regulars run into hundreds. Some, like the Wolf Man, go there every day of their lives and spend at least two hours, usually with a particular species. On Good Friday of 1934 a baby zebra was born. The keeper was going to call her Friday, but then one

of the regulars, Mr. Thoms (a bank manager, I fancy), pointed out that Friday is a man's name, and so the zebra filly is now officially named Freda. The next time you go to the Zoo, have a look at her. She is full of the spring.

The keepers, who number 120, do not always know the names of even their most regular visitors, and so they give them nicknames like "Apple Green" and "Veily" and "Whiskers." In the cat house—the correct name for the lions and tigers' home—the regulars include Cyril Shields the conjuror, Captain Middleton, Messrs. Prince, Fletcher, and Saunders (a sub-editor on the staff of the *News-Chronicle*), and Miss Callow. Until his death recently, Colonel Richardson was so regular a visitor that both a lion and a tiger were named after his two boys, Peter Neil and Alistair. All told, there are sixteen lions and six tigers. The greatest character among them is Jock, the Lion Who Likes Publicity. Jock is never happy unless there is a crowd near him, and if he sees a photographer he immediately gets his head in profile. When they sent him down to Whipsnade he "properly got the hump," to quote Horace, the attendant. In fact, he became so morbid and felt so disturbed at his apparent lack of drawing power that he had to be brought back to the Zoological Gardens. The grandfather of all the lions is Abdullah, who is over fifteen years old. The worst character is the oddly-named Cecil ("He is a fair —," says Horace).

One peculiar thing about all the lions and the tigers is that if they see a keeper or attendant in Zoo uniform who does not belong to their department, they go raging mad. They think he is an impostor and not entitled to his uniform. Curiously, they are perfectly able to distinguish between all the other uniforms—naval and military, for example—and those of the Zoo attendants. Another odd point about lions is that their manure is so strong that it will kill anything it is put on—even a cactus. This is a pity, because the beautiful

flower-gardens at the Zoo are largely manured with the local by-products. A final note about Cecil. He is the one lion who will not pose, if he can help it, for the photographer. All the others do.

Monkeys also like publicity, but hate being laughed at. Jimmie, the chimpanzee, was spinning himself round with a large hunk of straw, when the crowd started to laugh as I walked by. Walter Leney, the overseer who was taking me round, said, "Wait a moment. Jimmie is going to get mad. He will go on spinning himself, then you will see him crash his fist against the door and then rush at the railings between him and the crowd." Hardly were the words out of his mouth when Jimmie did so. At the same time it must be remembered that monkeys get very gloomy in the winter when few people come round to see them.

Of course, the high spot of the Zoo to-day is undoubtedly the gorilla house, where Mok and Moina live at the rate of £8 a week. These gorillas are given bottles of stout and port when they feel seedy; while porridge and chicken and sugar-candy appear on their menu almost every day. It is quite uncanny how they reason things out, unlike the chimpanzees, who are purely imitators. They have a fountain in their cage which will only work when pressure is applied to the knob on top. They discovered this within five minutes of their arrival. Now when Moina wants to wash her arms she sits on the fountain. Otherwise she just puts her hand on it. Despite their size, Moina is only nine and Mok is only six. They are so devoted to each other that the keepers are convinced that if one of them died the other would. When they were being moved from their former quarters to the new gorilla house, Moina was taken first. Mok burst into floods of tears, and when a few minutes later he was taken into the gorilla house, the pair of them hugged each other for five minutes. So fond are they of each other that actually a

window has had to be built in the partition between their two sleeping-quarters. Incidentally, Moina has managed to steal four of her keeper's official caps which, after placing on her head for a few moments, she has torn to ribbons. Both of them hate going to bed, and the only way to make them is to lure them into their sleeping-quarters with a bunch of grapes.

Another high-light of the Zoo to-day is Sumba, the dragon. Without doubt he is the origin of the mythical Chinese dragon, although his home is in the Dutch East Indies. Sumba is very gloomy because his companion died. But it does not now prevent his eating, although he was off his food at first. It is well worth watching him being fed, which happens at 3 o'clock on Tuesdays and Fridays. He swallows eggs whole like a pill, and also swallows pigeons with their feathers on, and rabbits with their fur. Then he remains motionless for a couple of days. Not that he has not got very powerful teeth, as the scarred wrist of his attendant demonstrates.

Personally, I do not care for birds, but I had hoped to see the crested grebe and the white Asiatic crane, the oldest inhabitant of the Zoo. The old crane, however, who was at least thirty-three years old, died in the winter, and so did the crested grebe. The latter, kittiwakes, albatrosses, frigate birds, and puffins are apparently impossible to acclimatize in this country. It is the same with baby Polar bears. Oddly enough, London is too cold for them. Leney assures me that the warmth inside the snow huts built by the Polar bears in their original home is considerable. Which reminds me, Sam, the Polar bear, feels the spring like everybody else, but, unlike humans, he has two wives. The result is that at this time of year he has to be fed extra portions of fat to keep him fit.

At the present minute there are, without counting fish

and invertebrates, 3,759 animals in the Gardens. Most people do not realize, however, how their population changes from week to week. Thus, in 1933, 929 were presented to the Zoo, 569 were purchased, 123 were deposited there, 209 were exchanged, and 251 were born. Among the births recorded in November and December were a Barbary wild sheep, two nylghaie, two hog-deer, one brown capuchin monkey, and one scimitar-horned oryx, all of which are alive.

What may seem very ordinary in comparison with these exotic animals, and yet most interesting to scientists, has been the successful rearing of three ordinary English fox cubs. They arrived one day old, and it is said to be impossible to bring them up when taken from their mother as early as that. The reason for this is that few people take the pains to sponge them all over—eyes, nose, mouth, and so on—as the mother would do with her tongue. Yes, I gather it is a great achievement.

But I must talk of the Wolf Man. Mr. Spens Steuart must be pointed to regularly by believers in the transmigration of souls as an example of their creed. With his hook-nose and pointed beard you could well believe that he was a wolf himself in a previous existence. This, I may say, he will take as the greatest possible compliment. He is devoted to these supposedly treacherous animals. Every day for two hours in the morning he romps with them, although they would pull any other man down. He even goes to Whipsnade and runs in the woods with them. It is true that he wears rust-coloured overalls over his ordinary clothes, but they never get torn, apparently. He assured me that he can understand their language and that they can understand him. He will carry a full-grown timber-wolf in his arms and it will lick his face as though it were a puppy. Yes, you should certainly go and see him some morning at half-past nine or ten.

How is it that the animals in the Zoo keep so marvellously

fit? The authorities are very coy about their medicine-chest, and also about the sanatorium. But this one can say, the lions and tigers are given a handful of grass every week. That is all they need to keep them fit, except an occasional dose of camomile. Cod-liver oil is given fairly regularly to the monkeys, but primarily it is the clever dieting that keeps them all in such good condition; and the glossiness of the two young tigers in the cat house is sufficient proof of their excellent condition.

Nowadays the keepers need to be very keen on their work, if only because of the regulars, who spend their time reading about their particular favourites. "When I was in the cat house," Leney said to me, "many big-game hunters came along and told me their experiences. I took it all in; and the nice part about it was that I was paid 1s. for listening to them. With the big cats and, in fact, all so-to-speak dangerous animals, the one thing you must not do if you go into the cage is to show any sign of fear. The best thing is to look away from them. If you look at them they think you are going to do something and that makes them nervous. One of the bravest men I knew was a Canadian. His name was Major Caulfield. You may remember George, the mandrill. He was a ferocious brute, but the major used to jump right up to him and say 'Hullo Georgie, old boy,' and the mandrill purred like a cat, although he had teeth 3 in. long. George died six years ago and I have not seen Major Caulfield since."

Last year over 1,500,000 people paid for admission to the Zoo, 65,000 more than in 1932, but over 500,000 less than in 1928. In the circumstances it seems a pity that the authorities do not follow the example of German cities such as Hamburg and Berlin, where every now and then, to stimulate public interest in the Zoo, they parade elephants and camels and other animals through the streets. Apparently, however, the Zoological Society prefers to regard its work scientifically and

will not think of it in terms of publicity. There is this to be said for it. Their accounts show a profit, and so there is no need for them to stimulate public curiosity further. On the other hand, they cannot, or at any rate they do not, sponsor any regular expeditions in search of new consignments of wild animals, and rely on the enterprise and generosity of their "Fellows," who number over 8,000, in supplying them with their specimens which they cannot buy or take in exchange.

The question of feeding the animals of the Zoo is rather grisly in regard to the carnivora. For every day a large, live, dray horse is walked into the Gardens and then shot. The man who does this has been at his job for twenty years, so I estimate that he must have executed over 7,000 horses. Every year over 200 tons of horseflesh are consumed by the wild animals and others, which compare with 1,095 pints of shrimps, 9 cwt. of onions, and 3 tons of grapes.

I have not had time to go to Whipsnade, but the report tells of one or two interesting experiments in the winter. A tall oak tree in Wallaby Wood was surrounded at a distance of 45 ft. from the trunk by a fence of wire mesh 15 ft. high, with an over-hang inwards of sheet-iron 4 ft. wide. Shelters consisting of barrels with very small openings were placed on a platform surrounding the trunk, and twenty-five Rhesus monkeys were put in the enclosure. The exhibition has been extremely attractive, and the monkeys have kept very fit all the winter. Unfortunately they killed the tree by stripping it of its leaves, and eating all the young shoots, and it has been thought inadvisable to extend the experiment.

In conclusion, if you want to win a bet with anybody as to the cleanest animal in the Zoo, remember that the raccoon earns that distinction because he is the one animal who washes his food clean in the trough before eating it.

## CHAPTER XXIX

### CORINTHIANS OF THE TURF

ATCHA, Atcha, and they all fall down. Somebody said not long ago that the greatest physical thrill in the world you can feel is the forward and upward surge of an aeroplane as it leaves the ground and climbs into the sky. That shows what a mechanical age we are becoming. In my own mind there is no doubt that the greatest physical thrill you can have is the swift rush downhill on skis, the second as you pass over the flat space built out on the side of the hill, and then the exhilaration as your skis leave the ground, or rather the snow, and you hurtle into the air on a ski jump. After all, you are doing it under your own power, so there is real pride of achievement, and for some reason or other the speed at which you are travelling seems ever so much greater. As you hiss through the air crouching and waiting to land without a spill, you get a kick out of life which you can experience in no other way.

But after that undoubtedly comes the upward and forward spring of a horse between your legs as it takes a fence. The sense of power and speed and freedom is gloriously uplifting in every sense of the word.

It is one of the curiosities of sport that jump racing, which demands so much more courageous jockeyship and just as much skill as flat racing, does not appeal in anything like the same degree to the great British public. The attendances are smaller and the betting is far less. And yet the atmosphere of jump racing is much more friendly than that of flat racing. There is so much more give and take. There is much less jealousy among the professional jockeys; and if one of them,

after a series of losers, wins a race, they all crowd round him and congratulate him in a way that does not obtain on the flat. This is very largely due to the amateur element in steeplechasing. No amateur can live with a professional on the flat. There must be a difference of nearly a stone between the best of them and any of the top flight of professionals. Even over the hurdles it is, with one exception, worth probably about 8 lb. to have your horse ridden by a professional. But in steeplechasing there cannot be more than a pound or two in it. It happens, of course, that amateurs get beaten at the finish because they are not quite so fit and are not so good at driving their mount home. The professional sits lower, knows how to use his whip, holds his horse together, and steals a win on the post quite frequently. Nevertheless, if an amateur can ride at 11 st. and has a good horse, he is liable to be in the money almost as often as the professional. In any event, he is more likely to chance his arm, like Captain C. N. Brownhill.

Altogether, there are about fifteen first flighters among the gentlemen jockeys. At their top I think one can safely put Mr. F. Walwyn, who had that nasty crash last autumn. Mr. Walwyn seems to get almost perpetual leave from the 9th Lancers. He is fair and clean-shaven, and is a real lightweight, being able to do 10 st. easily. He rides other people's horses as well as his own, and is one of the few amateurs who is equally good over hurdles or fences. Having put him at the top of the list, let us take the others at random.

Well, there is Sir Peter Grant-Lawson, another cavalryman. He is the Adjutant of the Blues and won the Soldier's Blue Riband, the Grand Military Gold Cup, on Castletown in 1932, and owns several very useful animals. Grant-Lawson has, I believe, twice completed the Grand National course at Aintree, and once was fifth on Aspirant, although he is rather short-sighted. Indeed, when he is not riding he

wears spectacles. He is short, dark, and rich, and is not at all perturbed by the fact that on two occasions his horse has been killed underneath him. One was Northern Linnet, which broke its neck in 1929 at Cheltenham; a jockey was killed on the same day. The other was Chicago, which broke its neck at the Wetherby Steeplechases in April, 1926. In the same race the favourite broke a fetlock, and another horse fell and broke its rider's collar-bone. It was on December 29, 1933, that Sir Peter Grant-Lawson won that remarkable race at Newbury. He was lying seventh when the six horses in front all took the wrong turning in the United Services Handicap, and he was able to make a wholesale objection against all of them and won the race.

Mr. Hugh Lloyd-Thomas is one of the best men to hounds in the country. Formerly First Secretary at our Embassy in Madrid, he is now the Prince of Wales's assistant private secretary. His best performance, I should say, was winning the Grand Sefton Steeplechase on his own mare, Destiny Bay, when over forty. He is long and lanky, and it is astonishing that a six-footer like him manages to keep going so well. He was educated at Eton and Oxford, is always beautifully dressed, and on one occasion, when still in the Diplomatic Service, is said to have been at the Foreign Office at 10.30, worked there until 1 p.m. (when the Foreign Minister went out to lunch), and was back again without a hair out of line at 3 p.m., having won a race in the interval.

Captain C. N. Brownhill is another winner of the Grand Military Gold Cup. He was a Gunner at the time. Since then he has transferred to the Irish Guards. His best horse is undoubtedly Drintyre, on whom he won the Scottish National. Another good race in which he was first past the post was the National Trial 'Chase at Gatwick. But his favourite meeting is Sandown. He has won over fifty races all told, and is an Old Carthusian. He can do 11 st. without any real difficulty,

is slightly sandy-haired, and has a wife as keen on racing as himself.

Mr. Peter Payne-Gallwey is another cavalryman among the Corinthians of the Turf. He is definitely good and seems, like Mr. Walwyn, to have considerable leave from his regiment. How else could he race at consecutive meetings at Birmingham, London, and Manchester? He won the Grand Military Gold Cup on Back Sight after a very fine display of jockeyship. He was at least a hundred yards behind the horse in front, but managed to get home. It was a coincidence that Back Sight did not belong to him at the time, although he had owned him previously. Mr. Payne-Gallwey, who is fair and clean-shaven, and about the same build as Mr. Walwyn, can also do 10 st. easily, and rides a good deal for Major Rattle Barrett's stable.

Nobody who saw the Grand National, either on the screen or at Aintree, will forget Mr. Edward Paget's ride on Egremont when he came in second. Mr. Paget is a stockbroker who rushes down to a nearby meeting at twelve o'clock, rides a winner, and gets back before the City closes. He is tall, blue-eyed, fair-haired, with a scar on his lip, and is just under thirty years old.

I do not know much about Mr. Little, except that his regiment is the 9th Lancers. He does a certain amount of riding and has had a few winners. He is one of the younger school.

Mr. Pete Boswick is a top flighter in the United States and is particularly good over hurdles, where he can hold his own with any professional, being, perhaps, the only amateur who can do so. It is only two years ago that he started riding over fences. He won the Imperial Cup, which is the star hurdle race at Sandown. He is a nephew of Ambrose Clarke, the millionaire, and won the Lancashire Hurdle Race at Liverpool. His style is rather like that of George Duller, and he

rode Dusty Foot in the Grand National. He is very short and very popular.

Mr. F. Furlong is yet another cavalryman, and won the National Hunt 'Chase in 1932 on Robin-a-Tiptoe. That was the occasion when his mother made the glorious remark in the paddock, "Isn't that splendid? I bred them both." He has taken one or two real tosses in his day.

Mr. A. Marsh is a nice lad and the son of a farmer. He has nothing to do with the famous family of trainers of the same name, but he is definitely good. He rides mostly in the North, and is not seen frequently enough near London.

Messrs. Bissill and Ransome are two other fine North Country riders of whom I am afraid I have no details, except that they have had a satisfactory number of winners.

Mr. Peter Cazalet, brother of the two M.P.s, Captain Victor Cazalet and Miss Thelma Cazalet, has rather dropped out of the game since he married Mr. P. G. Wodehouse's daughter Leonora. He has blue eyes, red cheeks, and an open sort of face. He is about 5 ft. 10 in. in height, and somewhat reserved. His best horse is Youtell. Mr. Cazalet never rides outside H. Whiteman's stables, which are close to his home at Sevenoaks. He himself often takes part in the morning gallops. I believe that Mr. Whiteman's stables are always identified with amateurs except for their apprentice, Fox. Lord Mildmay of Fleet, Lord Long of Wraxall, with whom I occasionally play golf in the South of France, and Mr. Jim Windsor-Lewis, who broke a bone not long ago, are other amateurs associated with this stable.

One must not forget Mr. F. Cundell, who is in the Royal Army Veterinary Corps. He is the son of the well-known trainer who died not long ago. But I do not think he owns any horses. He is about 5 ft. 9½ in.

There is also Mr. R. Harding, who won the National Steeplechase at Cheltenham some time ago, but does not do

much racing nowadays. He is a 7th Hussar, and has got a few horses trained by Webber, but seldom rides his own.

I feel I ought also to mention Major Jack Wilson, who won the Grand National on Double Chance when well into the forties; and Mr. Kenneth Goode, who used to be in the Guides, and has ridden in the Grand National more than once. He is dark and good looking, but I have not seen him for years.

These, then, are the top flighters. One often reads in the daily Press about millionaires who risk their necks. Few of them, fortunately, have been killed. It was a tragedy, however, when Captain Sassoon died as a result of injuries. He was one of the bravest men that ever happened and did an immense amount of good for jump racing. He once told a friend of mine that the reason why he rode in races was because it was the only thing that frightened him, and he was determined to overcome it. To begin with, he was an almost unbelievably bad jockey. People jeered at him, but he stuck to his leathers, morally if not physically. Towards the end he had become so popular that even when the bookmakers had had a bad race over him they would cheer him home.

Most of the gentlemen riders are soldiers, and no doubt it does them a bit of good with their regiment if they achieve distinction on the turf. Actually, however, one may be sure that it is purely for the excitement and thrill of it all that they risk their necks so often. Take a race like the Brookside Handicap Steeplechase a few years ago. There were three runners—Red Empress, Pride of Manister, and Clifford Hall. The race began at 2.4. At 2.6 Clifford Hall fell. A minute later Red Empress and Pride of Manister fell. A minute later Red Empress was remounted, followed in another seventy-five seconds by Pride of Manister and Clifford Hall being remounted. Three minutes later Red Empress fell and Clifford Hall pulled up. A minute later Red Empress

was remounted and won, followed fifteen seconds later by Pride of Manister. It was on April 2, 1921, that the Prince of Wales rode in his first steeplechase. It was the Welsh Guards' Challenge Cup, and he was the sole survivor on Pet Dog. The friendly atmosphere of jump racing was well illustrated on this occasion by the shout of "Come on, Steve," roared encouragingly at him by the crowd. In 1932, at Cheltenham, there were fifty-three spills, seven jockeys were hurt, and two horses were killed in two days' racing. But that does not stop the Corinthians of the Turf.

To-day it is pleasant to realize that we have a very good bunch of amateur riders over sticks. It seems to go in waves. Just after the War there were Harry Brown and Paddy Doyle, who, with possibly one other, stood out head and shoulders above the other amateurs. Harry Brown will be remembered for his performance in the Grand National in 1921. The Bore fell two fences from home, and Harry Brown broke his collar-bone. Somehow he managed to remount. One arm, of course, was useless. The reins were on the off side. So the horse took charge. With his face contorted with pain Harry Brown sat on grimly and came in second. Years ago it was the Beasleys, George Ede, Tom Pickernell, and Arthur Coventry who dominated the amateurs and were indeed as good as any of the professionals. But in 1908 there was a complete dearth of good amateurs.

Steeplechasing goes back to the year 1752, when two Irish squires who were distinctly bottled made a wager on themselves. Their names were O'Callaghan and Blake, and the course, which they completed after dinner, was from Bullevant to the church steeple of St. Leger. Steeplechasing, which gets its name from this race, originated from hunt dinner-parties after a great deal of claret and port, with a cask of rum as the usual stake. If you look at Alken's "First Steeplechase" you will see that the riders wore blue overalls, night-

shirts, and night-caps. It was not until 1831, when some of the officers of the 1st Life Guards were recuperating at the Turf Hotel, St. Albans, that the first real steeplechase over a prepared course was held. Some years later, William Lynn, mine host of the Waterloo Hotel at Aintree, arranged a "Grand Steeplechase" on February 29 (very suitably 1836 was Leap Year). It was won by Captain Becher, whose name is immortalized in the Grand National. The Lord Stanley of the day and Sir Thomas Massey were others who took part.

Other old originals were my Lords Clanricarde and Waterford, usually known as the Mad Marquess. In those days steeplechasing was more or less a fox-hunter's scramble, as is still shown by the rule that "no rider may open a gate or ride through a gateway, or go more than one hundred yards along a road or path." To-day it is a very different affair. Amateurs must keep as fit as a fiddle to negotiate the jumps and finish strongly. They know that any amount of money is being betted on their chances. They themselves, of course, are allowed to bet. On the other hand, they can claim no expenses and accept no presents from the owners whose horses they may be riding, if they are not on their own.

When an amateur has ridden ten winners he has to apply for a permit from the National Hunt Committee. These licences are renewed annually. The National Hunt Committee is very dictatorial, and if it thinks you are taking money for riding your licence will not be renewed. This supervision has become distinctly rigorous in the last five years. It was not so long ago that more than one famous amateur rider was known to refuse a ride unless the owner gave him the odds to £25. This was not entirely his fault. Jump racing is not inexpensive even if you do not keep a stable of your own. Taking three days a week as an average from November to April, the expenses will amount to any-

thing from £150 to £250 during that period (quite apart from doctor's fees).

Here, at the last minute, I suddenly realize that I have left out the name of one of the most gallant gentleman jockeys of all, Mr. Fred Thackray, who took that awful toss on Gregalach in the Grand National. He is the son of a charabanc proprietor. Which all goes to show that the Corinthians of the Turf are drawn from every class of life. Good luck to all of them. They can certainly take it.

*And do.*

## CHAPTER XXX

### THE START OF FLAT RACING

EVERY spring there are about 4,000 horses in training on this side of St. George's Channel. From November until the beginning of February they did nothing but two-hour walks, led by their stable boys. But since then they have been going for their seven-furlong spins.

But let us try to analyse the chances and categories of the 4,000. Well, 300 have not the slightest hope of ever winning a race by the widest stretch of the imagination. Then come about 400 ordinary selling platers who might win once with a bit of luck and be second a few times. Then follow about 1,000 moderate performers.

We next have about 400 two-year-olds so small and un-grown that though they may just be good enough to win a race early on, they will be withdrawn as soon as the bigger and better two-year-olds come along. Their fates will be various—sold abroad, sold for pony racing at Northolt, or sold as hacks. There will be another 400 two-year-olds too backward to train properly at all.

Now we come to the handicappers. Of these there are about 300 top-notch milers—good enough to enter for the Jubilee and the Cambridgeshire—and about 300 good two-milers of Cesarewitch and Chester Cup standard. To these we must add about 500 moderate handicappers who will specialize in Chepstow meetings. After that you have about 350 maiden plate three-year-olds, and finally about 50 classic three-year-old colts and fillies. Those comparatively few days between Newmarket and the Derby can be fatal. The way other horses can improve is shown by Colorado Kid

in 1933. The Kid started at the bottom of the weights and improved by at least three stone during the season, and that means a matter of about fifteen lengths. No need to remind regulars how he picked up the Jubilee, the Hunt Cup, the Chesterfield Cup, and the Doncaster Cup.

About jockeys. It is interesting that, with the exception of E. Smith (of whom later) and his young brother, D. Smith, there are very few young English jockeys coming on. The result is a growing influx of colonials. The reason for the lack of good English boys is that until seven years ago the minimum weight in a handicap was 6 st. In consequence, it was necessary to get boys to ride the lightweights. Now it has gone up to 6 st. 7 lb., and in many cases up to 7 st. and 7 st. 7 lb. As a result, the boys get fewer rides than before, and nobody can become a good jockey unless he has had experience.

Stanley Wootton, from whose stables have come R. Dick, J. Caldwell, J. Sirett, and A. Wragg, once said that it costs at least £1,000 to make a good jockey, if you take into consideration the races and bets which you lose and should have or might have won. Poor Buckham was killed, but South Africa is also represented by George Nicoll, Cecil Ray, and Teddy Ryan. Carslake, of course, is an Australian. Oddly, there are no Canadian jockeys, but we can expect more South Africans and Australians in the near future, particularly if Hammon does well.

E. Smith, whose first name is Ephraim, has had an interesting career. He is a Berkshire boy and rides for Major Sneyd's stable. About five years ago he broke his leg on Noros. This kept him out of the running for two years. He even advertised for a post abroad—in the South of France—as a lightweight jockey. Nothing came of that. He returned to the saddle three years ago, but did not ride at all well at

first, and people seriously wondered whether he had lost his nerve, as might very well have happened. But he recovered confidence and has never looked back. He rides at 7 st. 1 lb., which gets him a lot of mounts, as the average weight of a jockey is 7 st. 10 lb. He is more intelligent than many of his elders. Chubby-faced, blue-eyed, and fair-haired, he is noticeably rather silent—this lad who is already napped as Gordon Richards' successor.

I have no idea how many trainers there are, but in addition to the leading twenty, there must be dozens more who are good enough to train any horse for any race, but who do not get the chance to do so. Some of the others are bad judges both of distance and of handicapping, and cannot tell, even through their field-glasses, whether their animals are staying on.

It is one of the comedies of English racing that the flat begins with Lincoln. It nearly always rains there. It is always cold. It is not a particularly good course. If it were not for the tradition it would be absurd to give racing its send-off there. It is admittedly too early for Newmarket, but what is the matter with Newbury, except that they have had jump races there during the winter? All told, there are forty-eight courses where flat racing takes place. On the majority of days there are two meetings, and on some there are as many as four.

Some race-courses are privately owned, like Goodwood, and some belong to the corporation, like Doncaster and Brighton. Then there are the courses, like Gatwick and Wolverhampton, which belong to shareholders, who usually get a nice dividend. Newmarket belongs to the wealthy Jockey Club, who also own the gallops, but who put all the profits back into racing. Finally, there is Royal Ascot, where also the profits are put back.

People often ask whether an owner can show a profit unless

he bets. The answer is that unless he is a Lord Astor and owns classic winners, with the resultant prize-money, which can run into over five figures for a single race such as the Derby, it is impossible not to be on the losing side at the end of the year unless you bet. You can, for example, easily win a selling race and lose money because you have to buy your horse in. Then there is all the business of entering your horses for various races, all of which costs money. And don't forget the cost of transporting them (the horses, I mean) from the trainer to the race-course and back. It costs 30s., for example, merely to send a horse from Seaford to Sandown by train, quite apart from bringing it back. Sir Hugh Nugent has patented a motor horse-box in which the horses face the front and are consequently less nervous than in the ordinary horse-box, and one can hire them at no great cost—but it all mounts up.

It is almost impossible to write about racing to any extent without referring to the tote. All one can say is that the tote has so far not contributed a penny to racing or to charities, as was originally intended. It has merely made the bookies pay through the nose. Speaking as a layman, it seems to me that its only hope of success would be if all away betting were conducted compulsorily through it, as happens in France. Nobody has yet been able to estimate, not even Mr. Winston Churchill, how much the public wagers on the tote on flat racing. But this I do know: a famous bookmaker said casually to me the other day, "Frankly, I don't like losing more than £3,000 on a small race."

He then gave an interesting review of the results of the flat-racing season of 1933—from the bookmaker's point of view. His facts regarding the big races, read in reverse, show how backers have fared. Five per cent. of them, this bookmaker declared, win regularly. About 15 per cent. "break even." Here is his table:

Lincoln Handicap—Dorigen, 25-1 . . .	Fair
Grand National—Kellsboro' Jack, 25-1 . .	Bad
Metropolitan—Joyous Greeting, 20-1 . .	Good
City and Suburban—Great Scott, 20-1 . .	Good
Guineas—Rodosto, 9-1 . . . . .	Bad
Jubilee—Colorado Kid, 100-9 . . . . .	Bad
Derby—Hyperion, 6-1 . . . . .	Very bad
Hunt Cup—Colorado Kid, 100-8 . . . . .	Bad
Ascot Gold Cup—Foxhunter, 25-1 . . . . .	Good
Eclipse—Loaningdale, 9-2 . . . . .	Bad
Stewards' Cup—Pharacre, 22-1 . . . . .	Good
Goodwood Cup—Sans Peine, 20-1 . . . . .	Good
Ebor—Dictum, 8-1 . . . . .	Fairly good
Jockey Club Stakes—Tai Yang, 4-1 . . . . .	Bad
Duke of York's—Limelight, 4-1 . . . . .	Bad
Cesarewitch—Seminole, 100-6 . . . . .	Fairly good

“ Good ” means a profit to the bookie of £5,000. He lost £6,500 on the “ bad ” Hunt Cup.

His annual turnover is more than £3,000,000, which is one-thirteenth of the total turnover of all the bookmakers put together, but the head of the firm reckons that his net profit is never more than 5 or 6 per cent.

## CHAPTER XXXI

### HOUNDS BAY AND HORNS BLOW

THE chief hope of every hunting-season is the return to the hunting-field of the Prince of Wales. True, it means more to the Quorn than to the Belvoir, Cottesmore, and Fernie, and more to Leicestershire and Melton Mowbray than to the rest of the hunts put together. The fact remains that the Prince of Wales will occasionally, at least, put away his golf clubs and take part in the grandest sport of all. The result will be that a number of fashionable people will follow his example who might otherwise have stayed away. Altogether, there are 401 packs listed in the hunting year-book, but of these only 219 are foxhounds, including thirty-six in Ireland and Scotland. Masters of foxhounds are increasingly hard to find. They may receive £3,500 a year (many of them get less than half of this), but they will spend another £2,000 out of their own pockets. Rich men who have a great knowledge of hunting are scarce, and the wire fund alone can cost a hunt £2,000 a year.

The general prospects of any season are that foxes are plentiful, subscriptions are fewer and smaller, Americans are conspicuous by their absence, hunters and forage are cheaper, going is good, and above all, there is less wire. Too much wire is the curse of good hunting, and large sums of money have to be paid locally to prevent its increased use. "No names no pack drill," and so I will not give away the first-class hunt whose annual report lies in front of me as I write, and whose hedge-cutting and wire fund alone totalled £843 last year.

Let us take any young man who wishes to hunt regularly

this coming season beginning in the first week of November. Here is his budget, allowing for his having only a couple of horses. His man will cost 50s. a week and his horses 40s. a week to feed. Two boxes and a saddle-room will cost him another 15s. a week. His hunt subscription (if he goes with any of the leading packs) will be at the rate of 30s. or £2 a week, paid as a lump sum of between £30 and £50 for a season of five months. He must get to and from the neighbourhood of the hunt. He must spend at least £3 for his week-end expenses at a nearby hotel from Friday night to Sunday night. Mind you, this is doing it as cheaply as he can, unless he is lucky enough to be put up by friends and possesses a motor-car that saves him the rail fare. Even then it amounts to something over £200 in running expenses. The initial outlay is going to be very much more. Allowing for the fact that he is neither a millionaire nor so magnificent a rider that he can get to the top of the field on a £30 screw, he will probably spend £160 on his two horses. They will both have a couple of "ifs," of course, at that price. But the young man will presumably be wise enough to prefer a class animal with a slight whistle or fired hocks or a tendency to pull rather than a safe, worthy hunter which may cost him £150 and is nearly always a horror.

We next come to his hunting-kit. His pink coat will cost £15 and his black coat £10. His two pairs of boots will cost 10 guineas each, his three pairs of breeches an average of 4 guineas each, his crop will cost £2 like his hat, his three pairs of under-drawers will aggregate £4 10s., his two saddles will cost £7 each, and then there are the bridles, martingales, rugs, head collars, exercising snaffles, and cleaning gear, which will total another £10. On top of that he must contribute £2 a horse or more to the hedge-cutting and wire fund. He may feel it necessary to send a cheque of a pound or two to the huntsman as a Christmas box each year.

On top of all that he has dozens of incidentals that cannot be put down seriatim, and yet mount to a formidable total—drinks, horse-boxes, petrol, and so on.

Despite all that, hunting is said to be in a very healthy state, and is likely to cost less than ever before. The absence of the Americans automatically means that the price of hunters will drop considerably. Good hunters, particularly those that are good enough for point-to-points, will still fetch their 300 guineas. But without rich visitors, they are not likely to soar up past the £400 mark. I believe that the record price paid at auction for a hunter was £1,000, paid by Major Tommy Bouch. But that was a mistake. He sent a man to buy him a particular hunter "whatever it costs," and some other agent had received similar orders.

This absence of the Americans, like the Marshall Fields, for example, is a serious business. In these hard times it takes very few absentees normally paying £175 or £200 a year to make a hunt insolvent. Outside Leicestershire the average subscription to a first-class hunt is about £40. The Meltonian average is much higher. The reason is not far to seek. It is the best hunting country—the ten miles round Melton Mowbray—in the world. The Grafton and Pytchley and the Galway Blazers may claim that their jumps are bigger. But it is hard to imagine anything grander than the Tuesday country of the Cottesmore. Huge enclosures and big rolling meadows make it exacting for the heavyweight, but it is really lordly country for the others as they sail down the huge fields round Owston and Prior's Coppice. Thursday is rather an off day for them, though they may be lucky round Cottesmore itself, and most people who are not at the Embassy's extension night in London will make the long trek to the Fernie country round Rolleston and Shangton Holt.

On Saturdays Meltonians are able to hunt either with the Quorn at the Prince's special request or with the Cottesmore

alternatively with the Belvoir, round Sherbrooks in the Belvoir Vale itself, where there is no other covert for miles around, and a wonderful ride is ensured. For the other days in the week the Meltonians look to that absolute paradise of wild sporting country round Six Hills with the Quorn on Monday, to the same hunt's Friday country round Gaddsby Spinney, Baggrave, and Barkley Holt, where the fences are so beautifully laid that they can be taken fifty abreast, and finally to the Belvoir's Wednesday country round Waltham, and very good country it is, with famous names like Melton Spinney and Sproxton Thorns.

Meltonians are always somewhat on the defensive when the subject of what it costs to hunt in their country crops up. The fact remains that you have to have a first-class hunter if you are going to "live" with them at all in the big pastures, and first-class hunters are still very expensive. The average Meltonian will probably have four or five horses, and he may have a dozen or more. Even with forage so much cheaper than it used to be, it costs £1 a week to feed each horse, and, in addition, you must pay your head man £3 10s. or £4 a week, with another 38s. for the second horseman.

Houses in the Melton area are plentiful but unpleasant. It is extraordinary how few are the small convenient ones. The majority are large, cold, and uncomfortable. At least, though, their prices have dropped very considerably both there and everywhere. It was easy to get 20 guineas a week for a decent house in the Grafton country, and more in proportion round Melton. To-day it is easy to lease a house for £250 for the six months outside Leicestershire, and for £300 in the cream of the hunting country.

As to the horse-dealers, Leicestershire would not be Leicestershire without old Sam Haines, the brothers Young, and Harry Beeby.

The Duke's, as the Duke of Beaufort's hounds are called,

always show very good sport. They are lucky in having a real philanthropist behind them in the person of Mr. H. C. Cox of Twatley Manor. Mr. Cox is a Canadian in the insurance business, but he is a great sportsman, and when the hunt was metaphorically "up the spout," he joined the Duke as joint Master and put everything straight financially, but keeping in the background himself. The Master is always the Duke, and subscriptions have been put up to almost prohibitive prices for non-residents, but then they hunt six days a week.

Two years ago the Pytchley's subscription for one day's hunting a week was put up from £35 to £40, but there was such an outcry that it was actually put down to £30, where it remains, with the other subscriptions in proportion. Like other hunts, it suffers a certain amount of blackmail from the farmers, though on the whole they are a sporting lot.

A farmer can so easily come along and say, "I don't want you over my fields," and add that the hunt must make good the loss of his poultry—and who is to check that? One member of this hunt tells me that last season when she was out between the Pytchley and Fernie country, a man with a gun told her point-blank that she was not to go over his land. And, after all, you cannot altogether blame them sometimes. Three hundred people galloping like blazes over pasture-land are liable to leave a considerable number of large black holes on the grass if the weather has been wet. Then again, it can be no fun to have your cattle let out into the road, or to have your sheep disturbed in the lambing season. All over the country there has been a growing habit of carelessness among hunting people, and more than one Master has issued printed requests asking members to caution their servants on no account to jump fences; to shut gates after them; and to assist the farmers in putting back stock which may have got out.

On the whole, though, the farmers are extremely sporting chaps, as it is to be hoped that they will continue. Handling them is the delicate business of the Master, who can no longer afford to lose his temper with anybody and everybody as did the great Lord Willoughby de Broke, the grandfather of the present peer. On one occasion he loudly cursed Bay Middleton, who was piloting the late Empress Elizabeth of Austria and had unavoidably delayed the hunt for forty minutes because he had been compelled to wait for her to be sewn into her habit. Lord Willoughby swore deliberately in the hearing of the Empress, what is more. No, the Master to-day must be a model of tact. Farmers need an increasing amount of coaxing, not to mention compensation, and the rising generation is more interested in motor-bicycles than hunters.

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## CHAPTER XXXII

### PERENNIAL MIRACLE OF WIMBLEDON

LET us put forward the clock and imagine ourselves at Wimbledon on the day after the championships are over. The constables and the stars have departed. The centre court has settled down again to blank emptiness. We have been there in our thousands by motor-car, omnibus, motor-coach, and train. Some have queued up for hours at a time. Others have passed through in lordly fashion with their centre-court tickets. We have had thrills and surprises, cricked necks and strawberries and cream. We have lost umbrellas, grieved at our favourite's early eclipse, watched our friends playing on the more distant courts, listened to the plunk of the ball against the overstrung rackets, stared at the electric indicators giving the score to the people outside the centre court, heard twenty-three languages spoken, and thoroughly enjoyed ourselves. All those have been vivid sensations, enabling us not only to reply "Of course" to the hackneyed dinner-time query "Did you go to Wimbledon this year?" but to add sapient comments on the play, the looks of the players, and the behaviour of the players. But, English fashion, we have once again taken Wimbledon for granted. We accept the fact that it happens shortly after Ascot and three weeks before Goodwood. Ours not to reason why. Ours but to go and see.

Yet Wimbledon's success is not an annual accident or an annual miracle. It is the climax of a year's hard work and organization. It is this organization which has saved the event from slipping almost out of sight like Wimbledon. It is organization which has caused still more records of attend-

ance to be broken, though county cricket is being swamped by the depression. On the Saturday when the Air Pageant drew 200,000 people, when the Test Match was being played at Lord's, when a hundred and one different sporting fixtures were being held, the previous record of attendance was broken by 1,500. Since then it has been broken again and again.

The man at the back of Wimbledon is Major Larcombe, a regular officer for many years, who has disproved once again the pacifist theory that regular officers are like fish out of water when they leave the Army. Major Larcombe is a Devonshire man, and served for many years with the Royal Guernsey Light Infantry. He is thick-set, with a very broad head and horn spectacles. He has held his job for ten years. By his instructions a solitary police constable is stationed in the centre court guarding the precious turf, even on Sundays. You never know when a lunatic is not going to play tricks. If any of you saw the green canvas sheet which is spread over the centre court he will presumably have thought that the patches were the economic repairing of worn spots. They are nothing of the sort. Two years ago, just before the Championship, somebody threw corrosive acid over the canvas, hoping that it would burn through it and ruin the turf. The effort failed. But only just.

Yes, on the final Sunday it is always a peaceful scene. There is litter everywhere, although two complete lorry loads of debris have been removed every day for the past fortnight. Since then it has taken a dozen men eight hours to clear up the whole place. The room where the King and Queen have tea is just at the back of the Royal box. The sweet peas were still in the vases. Around the walls hang a number of old-time pictures of the first lawn-tennis championships. In 1877 the net sagged more than a foot in the centre. A few yards from this room was a long wooden box containing the original rackets, the original balls,

and the original net of the first championship. The rackets looked like snow-shoes, and the balls were, so to speak, fossilized.

Nearby is the comfortable room where the members of the All-England Lawn Tennis Club can take their ease. It is upholstered in the traditional green and purple. There are three hundred members of the Club. It takes ten years to become a member. The Duke of Kent is the president. Members have the privilege of access everywhere, as well as two centre-court tickets for every day of the tournament. For the rest of the year they can play on all the fifteen outside grass courts and the nine hard courts. It is a great privilege to become a member. Many apply and few are chosen. The entrance fee is only 10 guineas, and the annual subscription only 8 guineas.

Other people's money is always interesting, so we might perhaps delve into the secret finances of Wimbledon. It is of course impossible to reckon yet what the profits will be from this year's tournament. But even two years ago the net receipts were £29,000 for the fortnight. This year it will be very much more despite the slump. Three years ago no less than £68,000 had to be returned to unsuccessful applicants for centre-court seats.

In 1933 £9,000 out of the profits was spent on that new free stand on No. 2 court, together with the dressing-rooms underneath. The stand holds 650 people, and the dressing-room, with its resident masseur, can be used by fifty-six visiting competitors simultaneously. Not so long ago Wimbledon was distinctly primitive, with one dressing-room for the men and another for the women. Now there are three for the women and two for the men. There are also innumerable cloakrooms, and a rest-room for the umpires, and a new lost-property office. This is a very smart affair, with so many pigeon-holes that the commissionaires who

discover the lost property can have it stored away in the special aperture allotted to each staircase together with a note as to the time it was found.

But there are many other calls on the profits. There is the salary of the secretary, the secretary's secretaries, eight groundsmen, three decorators and carpenters, a gate-keeper, Maskell, the lawn-tennis coach and professional, and all the upkeep of the whole place. The grass seed alone is extremely expensive. It is a curiosity that the centre court at Wimbledon has not been re-turfed for at least ten years. Major Larcombe thinks, unlike his predecessor, that nobody, however expert, can re-turf it so that the surface is exactly level and no possible risk of a ball bouncing falsely can occur. Instead, as soon as there is a break in the weather after the championships, the court is re-sown, usually three or four times—which is far more often than the usual private owner or lawn-tennis club can afford. It is said to be extraordinary how, within six weeks' time, the centre court and the others which to-day so sadly beige-coloured on the final day, will be once again a verdant green.

There are many other burdens which have to be borne out of the £29,000. During the championships there is a temporary staff of nearly seven hundred people. Though many of them are waitresses paid by the catering company which employs them, many others, like the constables, inspectors, lost-property officials, and commissionaires, turn to the All-England Club for payment. Constables, as at the Derby, are paid £1 2s. 6d. a day, while the inspectors receive between £2 and £3. The remaining money, of which there are still a few thousands left, is all docketed. There are two thousand debenture holders who must be paid interest on their money.

And then the Lawn Tennis Association steps in and appropriates the rest for the general improvement of lawn-

tennis. This is allocated largely to the county associations for the employment of lawn-tennis coaches to teach promising young players who could not afford the tuition fees themselves. Over and above all that, there is still money left for the costly business of arranging these touring teams of players like those which visited America and the West Indies not long ago. The £29,000 certainly seems to have gone a long way, when all is considered.

The importance of Wimbledon, financially and from the angle of prestige, to Great Britain is immense. Mr. Sabelli, the Secretary of the Lawn Tennis Association, estimates that there are at least 500,000 lawn-tennis players in this country, of whom 200,000 are members of clubs affiliated to the Lawn Tennis Association. These numbers were but one-fiftieth before the War. One can also hazard a guess that the lawn-tennis industry is worth at least £5,000,000 a year to Great Britain in manufactures. Take tennis-rackets, for example. You can take for granted, too, that the firm which supplies the seed for the centre court at Wimbledon has a world-wide sale for it. Tennis flannels and the curious short-sleeved shirts which look more like singlets and are all the vogue these days, are despatched all over the globe by the firms which make them for the players who compete at Wimbledon. The tennis-balls, too, have an international reputation. Incidentally, the number used on an average each year at Wimbledon is 7,200 during the fortnight, and it may interest lawn-tennis players to know that they are kept in a refrigerator at the exact temperature of 68 degrees for two hours before play. They are only used for one set, and you can buy them for half a guinea or so a dozen afterwards.

The indirect profits from Wimbledon are immense. Taking the actual players you find that 128 men and 96 women take part in the singles, and 64 pairs for the men, 48 pairs for the women, as well as 80 mixed pairs. They come from Australia,

Monte Carlo, Poland, Switzerland, the United States, Japan, and even Russia—twenty-three countries in all. To get a proper idea of what this means you must visualize the cost of their fares, their hotels, and all their incidental expenses. In addition, you must count the thousands of people who visit London from abroad in order to see the lawn-tennis at Wimbledon. Cricket is a native sport. It would not bring half a dozen Americans to London. Ascot is too exclusive for all but the few. The Derby is too crowded. But Wimbledon shares with the Grand National the honour of being one of the two sporting events which are most popular abroad.

The reason for its appeal is many-sided. First of all, there is the international flavour with the partisanship natural to us all. Secondly, the fact that the spectators are seated well above the main courts makes the game look infinitely faster than it really is. This is an extremely important point. Thirdly, there is all the drama of the play in a game where tempers run unduly high, where mannerisms are worshipped or intensely disliked, where the tension is so great that you can never tell when someone is not going to crack.

The patriotic wish to see one's own countrymen win grows more acute each year in this country as our young players improve. The wish used to be father to the thought that we might possibly win, and if any of our players reached the last eight we were all enchanted. Times have changed. The French menace is getting old. The American menace is getting stale. The day will come when we shall once again hold all the championships, even if we have to wait for Helen Wills to retire altogether before we can make a clean sweep of the cups. I had a long conversation about the players and the spectators with Captain Wakelam, who, with Colonel Brand, is entrusted by the B.B.C. with the running commentary at Wimbledon. All of us have seen the programmes, which exhort us :

Not to applaud during a rally,  
Not to applaud a double fault,  
Not to applaud a net-cord stroke,  
Not to confine applause to one competitor.

It is a terrible thing, though, that the British, who always pride themselves on being the most sporting nation in the world, should be compelled to have these hints given to them publicly. In the case of applause during a rally or for a net-cord stroke, only the crassest ignorance would be responsible. But it is ugly to note that spectators have to be asked not to applaud double faults nor to confine their approbation solely to their favourite. Captain Wakelam is quite frank about it.

"I wish," he said, "you would say something about this disgraceful partisanship. When Helen Wills was playing Mrs. Godfree, the crowd naturally applauded the English-woman's strokes. But they ought to have the good manners also to applaud a sizzling good shot from her opponent. If sportsmanship means anything, a good shot should be applauded, whoever plays it. In my opinion, this unsporting spirit is largely due to the fact that the majority of the spectators are women, and they have not got a proper sense of fair play."

Captain Wakelam has always had the courage of his convictions. He went on to contrast the play of the women and the men. In his opinion the women competitors are much less likely to lose their nerve and get temperamental than the men. He mentioned instances in the past when leading men players behaved so childishly that they threw their matches away. He also spoke of the totally different mentality which obsessed British players in comparison with foreigners.

"British players, when they take the lead, play for safety.

The foreigners go just as hard as ever. They never slow up. Look at that centre-court match when one of our players was twice within a point of the match. Each time she failed to smash an easy volley, as she would normally have done. She just poked it back—playing for safety. She lost that set, and the next, and the match. Served her right, too. Speaking generally, the standard of play has been very much higher than in previous years and, thank goodness, our players have not given such disgraceful exhibitions of bad manners as some of them did last year. You know whom I mean.” So do we all.

I am not quoting Captain Wakelam now, but it is safe to say that certain players have a curious attraction about them which is not entirely due to their popularity. People crowded to see Big Bill Tilden in case he got into a tantrum or in case he got beaten. There are two English players whom I always follow for the same reason. By contrast, Borotra is the most popular lawn-tennis player alive. He and his *béret* are applauded with equal fervour in France, England, and the United States. Everywhere he goes he is the idol, and even the inhabitants of other countries hope that he will win. Every year, incidentally, he grows more charming and—more English. Not all the Frenchmen are as popular as he—and, again, the tennis fans will know whom I mean.

Eileen Bennett will always be followed because she looks so much more exotic than the average player. Betty Nuthall has always been popular both because she is so good-tempered and because her trail of defeats after her early promise has only been equalled by Bombardier Billy Wells in the prize ring, and nobody was more popular than he. Helen Wills’s cucumber coolness and unmatched play will always draw the crowd. Nobody would dare go home after Wimbledon without being able to say that they had seen her play. She has not been beaten since 1926 except the time when she

was ill. That was at Cannes, when Lenglen defeated her at their only encounter.

I shall never forget it. There was a sycamore tree in the run-back and it was filled with Frenchmen who were shaken off like ripe plums by the gendarmes, all except one man who sat at the very top waving a copy of the *Figaro*. Four men were arrested that day. Two points were given to Lenglen that were really out. Nobody knew much about Helen Wills then. She was all by herself that evening and we danced together at the Carlton Hotel. She was more reserved than ever in those days. Since her marriage she has become much more human, and the time may come when she will be as popular as Lenglen, though one can expect never to have the scenes that the latter caused. Two years ago, incidentally, she told me that she had never seen the Wimbledon Singles Cup which she has won so often. Later, when I asked Major Larcombe where the Singles Cup was, he said that he could not for the life of him remember. He rather thought that it was in the safe deposit of the Goldsmiths and Silversmiths Company, from which it is annually removed in order to have the name of the current champion inscribed on it.

The winner of the Men's Singles is consoled, however, with the Renshaw Cup presented annually by the members of the former champion's family. He also receives a gold medal. Miss Helen Wills—unless I must start calling her Mrs. Moody—is entitled to receive each time a first prize, value £10, and a bracelet worth 5 guineas. What she always has done, however, is to put the value of the two together and buy a painting. According to the rules, the winner may not receive cash, cheques, money orders, consumable goods, or wearing apparel. But the prize-money can be spent in any other way.

Prize-money brings one to the question of amateurs and professionals in lawn-tennis, but it is a subject which, accord-

ing to Major Larcombe, can be very easily dismissed. With the exception of Maskell, who is the professional champion of England, the professionals are nothing like as good as the amateurs. And as for the amateurs, far too close a watch is kept for any of them to be able to make anything out of lawn-tennis except by writing articles. Their link up with sports goods outfitters has been completely and finally snapped.

Meantime the work continues just like the making of poppies after Poppy Day. True, Major Larcombe is saved the disturbances of telephone calls—like that of the woman who called up to ask him to stop her daughter eating sandwiches in the queue because she thought the ham was possibly bad ! But there is all the immense task of straightening out the accounts. Then, before the autumn is out, the season tickets for next year's championship have to be allotted to members of the All-England Club and to the debenture holders. Next comes the world-wide circulation of previous applicants for season tickets, followed by the ballot, which is conducted with discs and canvas bags like the ones used in banks. The odds against your being lucky are four to one. Then comes the allocation, and before you know where you are the championships have begun again.

Once I asked the gate-keeper which he preferred—the rush of the big fortnight or the rest of the year ?

“ I dunno,” was the reply. “ For the rest of the year I go up and down on my daily toil with three men under me. During the championships I sit here and get nothing but abuse. People ask a hundred and one questions, they talk all at the same time, and if I don't answer them simultaneous-like, they get angry and probably report me. Sometimes coloured people and other foreigners come along, not knowing a word of English. But I have been seven times round the world and can make myself understood in any language.

You know the way foreigners talk with their hands? Well, I do the same. Sometimes they give me bits of paper with writing on them. Of course, if they are Japanese or Chinese I am beat. But I usually find some way round."

There he sits in his box, when he is not busy on the job, all the year round—an ex-chief stoker with a face like oak, bright blue eyes, and a string of medals across his chest. It must be a strange life after his years at sea. But at least he can add the sequel to the lines from Kipling's "If" which are painted on the entrance to the Centre Court :

*"If you can meet with triumph and disaster  
And treat those two impostors just the same"*

—which is more than quite a few of our lawn-tennis players can do.

## CHAPTER XXXIII

### THE RISE OF CIVIL AVIATION

EVERY taxpayer in the country has a stake in Imperial Airways, as he contributes to its upkeep in the form of a Government subsidy. It is to his interest, therefore, to see that his money is well spent, and that the company, while meant to pay a dividend, should also live up to the objects for which it is subsidized. That it does so to-day is undoubted. It has become an imperial asset, and in South Africa the station superintendents are treated like Government officials. Moreover, the new staff are being recruited from the major public schools, and have to pass various tests of the National Institute of Psychology before they are selected.

The more you learn about the company, the more you realize what a vast undertaking it is. It has an interest and buildings in forty-seven aerodromes. It owns and operates motor-boats as well as aeroplanes. Its machines fly 2,000,000 miles a year. Its routes, all told, amount to 14,000 miles. It employs thirty-four captains of air-liners, and twenty-five first officers, quite apart from wireless operators, stewards, and ground staff. It has its own post office at Victoria, where a quarter of a million letters are handled a year. (It is a real experience to go there at 11 a.m. on Saturdays and watch the last-minute rush of people arriving with letters that *must* reach Karachi or Cape Town within the next ten days.) It has eleven rest-houses such as those at Gaza, where Samson removed the gates of the city, and at Shargah on the Arabian coast, where the rest-house is a real Beau Geste fort, with a guard of thirty-six retainers of the local sheikh, where

the petrol has to be brought for nine miles on the backs of camels, having been taken off dhows, and where the water must be brought in goatskins on donkeys' backs for a distance of two miles.

Think of the catering which has to be carried out. I am not thinking just of the meals in the aeroplane between London and Paris, but the food that must be provided at the various stopping-points throughout the world. As a case in point: the Christmas Day machine leaving Brindisi for the East was provided with mulligatawny soup, smoked salmon, fresh roast turkey and sausages, York ham, Christmas pudding, Stilton, half a case of champagne, and two bottles of port. Times have changed in the last ten years.

Just after the War it occurred to many people to use aircraft for the purpose of commerce. Unfortunately, the War did nothing to promote the science of aerodynamics. The aeroplane of 1918 was more reliable, and its performance was superior to that of 1914, but generally speaking the performance was obtained at the expense of excessive power input. In 1919 several firms came into existence in Great Britain with the object of operating commercial air services. The only one of any consequence was Aircraft Transport and Travel, Ltd., which established a service between London and Paris. A little later Handley Page began to operate between London and Brussels. Each of these companies used uncomfortably converted war machines, and as a result soon found that it was impossible to operate these services except at a loss unless prohibitively high prices were charged. Hence, the fare from London to Paris was £25, and the fee for carrying a letter was half a crown. Moreover, both firms were soon undercut by foreign companies which were in receipt of State aid.

Things looked very bad. Various companies started operations and then failed. Finally, Imperial Airways came

into existence on April 1, 1924, with a capital of £1,000,000 and a guaranteed subsidy of not less than £1,000,000 spread over ten years. In it were merged the interests of the four companies that still survived—Handley Page Transport, Ltd., Daimler Airways, Ltd., Instone Air Lines, and the British Marine Air Navigation Company.

At that time the aeroplanes consisted of seven biplanes with one 440-h.p. engine, two flying boats with a 365-h.p. engine, and four biplanes with two 355-h.p. engines. Three weeks later a daily London-to-Paris service was begun. Then the daily service to Cologne and back via Brussels started. It was not until the November of 1924 that the first three-engined air-liner was commissioned.

In the course of the first year of its existence the company carried 11,000 passengers, 200,000 letters, and flew 850,000 miles. This compares vividly with the year ending March 31, 1933, when the passengers had increased to 61,000, the letters to 8,000,000, the miles flown to 2,000,000, and the traffic ton-miles also to 2,000,000. One may be sure, moreover, that these numbers will have increased enormously again when the reports of the financial year 1934-5 are made up.

But we are going ahead too fast. At first the subsidy was based on the number of miles flown, the basis being that 4,000,000 miles had to be flown in the first four years, and thereafter at the rate of 1,000,000 a year. After the first year it was found that this was unsatisfactory because the company did not benefit from the use of more modern aircraft of larger capacity, and it would pay the company to employ thirty-eight Moths instead of one thirty-eight seater like the *Heracles* (though of course an air-liner of that size could not be thought of at the time). The agreement was therefore altered so that 425,000,000-h.p. miles were substituted for 1,000,000 miles. In consequence, the work done by the fleet was and is reckoned

in proportion to the horse-power employed by the company, and there is a direct incentive to develop larger and more economical types of aircraft.

Roughly speaking, the direction of Imperial Airways is divided up between the air superintendent, the ground superintendent, the chief engineer, and the traffic manager. Their work dovetails ; but let us turn to the transport of passengers. The ordinary passenger requires comfort and absence of fussing, quiet engines, and an ability to have a meal. If he is an Englishman he would prefer the conveyance entirely to himself. Of the two alternatives, speed or comfort, he nearly always prefers the latter. Now all of these essential needs of comfort detract from the useful pay load of the machine.

Freight is the ugly sister of the air-transport world. The consignor wants it sent as quickly as possible, but he will not pay a good price for this advantage. This class of traffic has the further complication of being of a most diverse character. Grand pianos, live tigers, tubes of bacilli, and wireless valves are not at all unusual freights. Imperial Airways has always believed that for the present state of aeronautical development, mixed loads are essential ; that is to say, mails, freights, and passengers must be carried in the same machine. This policy is being criticized, but it has been justified by experience. In 1927 one aeroplane in three in America existed for the carriage of mails only. Now only one in ten does so. In Holland and France, too, they have reverted to mixed loads.

The greatest compliment that was ever paid to Imperial Airways occurred when the premium rate for insurance against accidents to passengers travelling by Imperial Airways was reduced from 12s. to 1s. per £1,000, which is the same rate as that charged if you travel by railway train or ship. Nor is this undeserved. Up to date, 13,000,000 miles have been flown, with only seven accidents in which loss of life occurred.

The trouble about aeroplane accidents is that they are described so vividly by eyewitnesses that they are much more difficult to forget than those occurring in railway trains and ships. It is good news, however, that the chief engineer of Imperial Airways hopes that within two or three years compression-ignition engines, on which experiments are being carried out to-day, will have reached such a state of capacity and perfection that they will be used in big air-liners. This will mean the use of non-explosive fuel, with the result that the chances of a fire will be extremely remote. This, of course, is one of the chief objectives of the company.

How much do these big aeroplanes cost? The *Heracles* cost about £30,000. The *Scylla*, in course of construction, will be slightly more. The pilots receive a retainer of £400 a year and 10s. an hour flying pay. Some of them make as much as £2,000 a year.

Imperial Airways serve three continents and twenty-two countries. Their passengers have numbered over 350,000. In the summer there are five services a day between London and Paris, as well as week-end and Sunday excursions to Le Touquet, and regular daily services to Basle and Zurich. It takes a week to fly to Calcutta, which is a saving of over a fortnight by ship and train. To-day the journey to Singapore is being further reduced, which will mean a saving of a month. The cost of the fare, for the sake of interest, is £180. On the other hand, it is only £234 return to Capetown and £130 single.

At any given moment there are a dozen Imperial Airways' machines in the air. All told there are twenty-eight of them, of which eight are the *Heracles* type and eight the *Atalanta* type.

The most interesting room at the head offices at Victoria Station is the one in which the whereabouts of each aeroplane is marked on a chart of the world. A dotted line marks the

route of a flying boat ; a purple line marks a duplicated service ; a blue dot means bad weather ; a red dot (extremely rare) is engine trouble ; a brown dot signifies that the aerodrome is unserviceable ; a yellow dot means miscellaneous reasons for delay. As a matter of fact, last month every single aeroplane arrived at Capetown exactly on time.

It is superfluous to say that no royal baby's welfare is watched over with more meticulous care than an Imperial airliner. Even the Government demands and receives its daily health report. Like a ship, an air-liner is only allowed to carry a certain load, and it is forbidden by law to exceed this rate. That is why every passenger is weighed.

As I began with the taxpayer I might as well end with him. He will be pleased to realize that every year the subsidy he pays diminishes, and one of these days it looks as though, despite competition of the foreign State-subsidized companies, Imperial Airways will become self-supporting.

## CHAPTER XXXIV

### ON 'CHANGE

A COUNTY cricket captain and a sporting baronet both "dared" me. The cricketer dared me to walk with him across the floor of the Stock Exchange. The baronet dared me to walk without him across the floor of the Stock Exchange. He said he would meet me at the other side. The reason why he would not accompany me was because he had a plated leg and would not have been able to move quickly enough from the scene of action if I had been discovered. I refused both of these challenges, because I happen to have one of those unfortunate faces which once seen are not easily forgotten, and quite a number of people might have recognized me, shouted "Fourteen hundred," and then might have made life a little hectic for a few moments until one of the "waiters" saw my plight and elbowed me out to the nearest exit.

Nowadays, strangers do not have so rough a time as they used to do if they were detected trespassing. Not so long ago they would have their jackets torn and possibly their trousers removed. To-day the most that is likely to happen if you are recognized is that one or two people will start pushing you about, tilting your hat over your eye and urging you with misleading geniality not to leave them, until a waiter, resplendent in gold-braided top hat and dark-blue uniform with red collar and buttons, spots your predicament and removes you rapidly. The cry of "Fourteen hundred" is a traditional throw-back to the time when for some years there were exactly 1,399 members of the Stock Exchange, and any new-comer was therefore an interloper.

Frankly, I think I was a bit of a coward in not accepting these challenges. For the Stock Exchange is enjoying such a boom that there is no time for horseplay. Shares are soaring and "bargains" are being made every minute. Even at luncheon time the place is a mild pandemonium. I know, because following directions, I made my way to the side door of the Stock Exchange leading on to Bartholomew Lane and was able to stand for some minutes at the entrance gazing on the scene.

The Stock Exchange is a vast, irregularly-shaped building with two domes and a roof mostly of glass. It is early Victorian in atmosphere, with any number of meaningless pillars which waste a great deal of space and prevent one from seeing more than two-thirds of the floor at any one point. Various little pulpits, on which stand the waiters, emerge above the sea of bare heads and tall hats. The floor is covered with torn paper. People rush to and fro, bargaining into one another every now and then. There is a tremendous noise. Brokers hurry in and out of telephone boxes where they are getting orders from clients in Glasgow (let us say), finding out what the prices are, hurrying back to tell the country brokers, hurrying out to execute their commissions, hurrying back to say that they have been successful.

The "waiters," as the uniformed servants of the Stock Exchange are called, shout the names of the people who are wanted outside. The pneumatic telegraph wads arrive and depart with loud expiring bangs. The people in the various markets yell out what they want to buy or sell. There are snatches of choruses from the more boisterous members. Even now, when waiting for the Paris prices, which come through at 1 p.m., or the American prices, which come through shortly after 3 p.m., there is a certain amount of horseplay. An unpopular member will be standing with a newspaper innocently under his arm. Some so-called wag

will light it with a match, and then, when it is well started, will shout "Fire, fire," while the victim throws down the burning mass and stamps it out amid derisive laughter. Another trick is to blow up empty paper bags which have been used for fruit and sweets, and then jump on them to cause loud reports. At the moment there is not enough time to indulge much in this witty sport. But boys will always be boys, even on the Stock Exchange.

As I gazed through the open door, like whoever it was gazing at Paradise (?), I noticed that there was one section of the huge, beige-coloured, shapeless hall where men queued up patiently. There was no shouting. A tense muttering was all that one could distinguish. This was the Consols market. The men in the queues were armed with orders by wire, telephone, and cable to buy anything from five thousand to half a million. There is no open bidding here, and there is no reason to shout. The prices are standardized.

Each market has its own section of the great hall, which looks rather like the Royal Exchange. One section, for example, is by tradition the place where brewery shares are dealt in. In another there will be heated men yelling, "Forty-five shillings buy ——." Next to them will be others raising the bid by threepences and sixpences. They are jobbers, of whom there are twenty-five hundred, shouting the odds. They cannot deal with the public—only with members of the Stock Exchange. They are like a lot of bookmakers, and they have only one complaint—they can never tell whether the man who comes up to them with an order is a buyer or a seller. In consequence, they must always quote the range of prices on which they are prepared to do business. There is a good old story about a jobber who was offering some stock between 70 and 70½. A man came up and asked whether the jobber could not give him a closer offer, as he was acting for the estate of a deceased man. The jobber,

presuming naturally that the estate was being sold, said, "69½ to 70." The broker said, "I'll take it at 69½." For the dead man had been a gambler and had been caught short of the market, and so the broker's instructions were to buy.

As I peered through the doorway I noticed that hardly one man in eight wore a hat. One of the few was Sir John Mullens's successor as Government broker. His name is Gosling. There were even a few tall white hats, worn by principals, of course. Clerks never wear them. Considering the numbers of people, it was surprising how little dust there was. That is because the waiters walk to and fro with peculiarly long-necked watering-cans sprinkling an ozonized mixture on the floor. Naturally the atmosphere becomes a trifle stuffy in the afternoon, but it never rises above 70 degrees, and it is nothing like so bad as it was in the old days when smoking was allowed. Smoking was forbidden because of the alleged danger from fire to the strong rooms underneath the floor of the house.

The main dome of the Stock Exchange is 100 ft. high over the Kaffir market. Water is frequently sprayed on its glass surface in hot weather to cool the atmosphere. On the other hand, when it is raining hard, the water comes through on to the floor below. Despite all this, when business is keen, the moisture pours off the faces of the members. Surprisingly, because members of the Stock Exchange have little more than an extreme shrewdness in common, there is little open loss of temper. People may bump into one another in their excitement when business is brisk.

Recently, indeed, business has been so brisk that dealers have no time for luncheon. In the past, it has been so flat that they have had no money to buy their luncheon. One heard of harrowing stories of well-known jobbers borrowing half a crown to get their luncheon, and of firms which have been compelled to pay for the season tickets of their members

on the Underground. To-day this has all changed. Firms are expanding their staffs again, and everyone is working at top speed from 9.30 a.m. to 8 at night. This was originally the result of the Conversion Scheme, and the effects are not likely to wear off for a long time.

Stockbrokers were flooded with inquiries from clients who asserted that they could not live on their income when their dividends were cut from 5 per cent. to  $3\frac{1}{2}$ . Letters of this sort poured in by the thousand, and as many of the clients were compelled to invest in Trustee stocks the latter rose enormously. Nearly all of them wanted gilt-edged stocks in any case, so those rose enormously too. Others were prepared to take a chance in Industrial stocks, with the result that these have shot up also. Despite the number of these people with small incomes, they form nevertheless only a fraction of the holders of War Loan, and so the Conversion Scheme is in no way imperilled. On the other hand, they are numerous enough to be a tonic for all the other markets.

After leaving my peep-hole at the door of the Stock Exchange, I was just walking off down an alleyway when I met an old friend buying himself a peach from the open-air stock of chocolate and fruit off Bartholomew Lane. He had no time to go to lunch at the Lyons in Throgmorton Street, or Slaters, or the chop-houses in Cornhill like Simpsons and the George and Vulture, which are the favourite resorts of the hungry stockbroker. He bought me a peach, however, and as we ate them in the hot sunshine he showed me his notebook with the "bargains" he had made in the last twenty minutes. The list began with South Australian fives and New Zealand fives by way of Consols, War Loan, International Nickel, Marks & Spencer, Indian four-and-a-half, Treasury fours, Local Loans to more Consols. I noticed that against the Consols he had written 130s.

I said, "That seems a pretty small order."

"Not so small as that," he said. "That shilling sign indicates thousands, and means that I have just done a deal of £130,000. As you can guess, I have done very nicely indeed to-day, thank you."

How many people do you suppose are on the Stock Exchange? The answer is that there are only 3,940 members, though in 1904 there were as many as 5,000. And how do you become a member of the Stock Exchange? The answer is that, first of all, you must buy a nomination from a retiring member. These nominations fluctuate in price tremendously. Before the present boom you could buy one for anything between fifty and a hundred pounds. During the War they were worth nothing. To-day you would be lucky if you could get one for £250. It must be added that, officially, a nomination is not regarded as a tangible asset. It is not like the New York Stock Exchange, where you sell your seat as a matter of course, and know that it is definitely part of your stock-in-trade. During the boom period in New York seats were sold for as much as £20,000. At the height of the 1928-9 boom people here asked as much as £2,000 for a nomination, but it is not on record that they received this amount.

Having got your nomination, the next stage is to find three members of the Stock Exchange, who must be principals, willing to be surety for you for £500 each for a period of four years. This is in case of your defaulting, and they sign an application form to the effect that they recommend you as a fit and proper person, and add that you are eligible under the rules of the Stock Exchange. When this has been done you pay an entrance fee of 600 guineas. There is also an annual subscription of 100 guineas. On top of that you must buy three Stock Exchange shares, which now stand at £175 each. A few weeks ago they stood at £145—another sign of the times.

Mind you, if you start by becoming an unauthorized clerk and wear a blue button on the lapel of your coat, which costs 15 guineas and an annual subscription of 30 guineas, and enables you to go into the Stock Exchange though you cannot actually deal, things are not so expensive. For, after two years of this, you are eligible to be an authorized clerk, when, though you are not a member, you can go in and deal on behalf of your firm though not for yourself. After two years of this, or four years of being an unauthorized clerk, it costs you only 300 guineas entrance fee to become a full member of the Stock Exchange. And, taken by and large, it costs you only about half what it would otherwise have been.

Some of the unauthorized clerks who hurry about with their 15-guinea blue button run messages and get prices until they are poor old men elderly enough to be grandfathers. They must be distinguished from the half-commission people who have nothing officially to do with the Stock Exchange, although some of them may incidentally be unauthorized or even authorized clerks. Half-commission men have seats in the brokers' offices, but they are not members of the Stock Exchange, nor are they recognized by the House. They merely introduce outside business to the firm which patronizes them, and split the commission on the orders which they bring.

For ten years after the War, the more enterprising firms of brokers employed any number of half-commission men, picking them where possible from as many different circles of society and business as may be. One might be a member of the Bachelors' Club. Another might be a member of the Yacht Squadron. Another might be an ex-Guards officer. Another might hunt from Melton Mowbray and bring in business that way. A fifth and sixth might be first-class amateur golfers or lawn-tennis players. The nineteenth hole has often been a fruitful business place for getting an order,

especially if the crack has allowed the middle-aged millionaire to square the match on the last green.

During the boom period some of the cleverer half-commission men earned as much as £4,000 a year. Since then they have been at their wits' end to pay their taxi-cab fares unless they have had some other means of livelihood.

Altogether, there are fourteen of the pulpit-like stands in the Stock Exchange, of which two have a sinister significance for members who are in low water. It is on these that a waiter takes up his position and, hitting the side with a hammer three times, announces that Messrs. Wallop & Wallop, trading as Twistem, Cheathem, & Phony, cannot or have not complied with their bargains. This follows either their voluntary announcement to the Committee that they cannot meet their obligations, or the report from another member that he has received a cheque which has been dishonoured. Since the War this has happened between twenty and thirty times, but on less than a dozen occasions has the default been important, and nearly always it has been sheer bad luck on the part of the firm "hammered."

Once upon a time it was possible to deal in any kind of share. To-day there is a General Purposes Committee numbering thirty. This Committee is not to be confused with the Trustees and Managers of the Stock Exchange, who are eight in number and are directors of the actual Stock Exchange Company. The General Purposes Committee frequently refuses permission to a firm of brokers who have asked leave to deal in the shares of a new company—at least until after the publication of the first annual report and balance sheet. The best example of what could happen before the public was protected in this way was the company which was formed at the time of the South Sea bubble "for carrying on an undertaking of great advantage, but nobody to know what it is." Each subscriber of a £2 deposit was to be

entitled to £100 per annum per share. Its flotation met with great success, no less than a thousand shares being taken in six hours and the deposits paid.

You may say that such a thing could not possibly happen to-day. I am not so sure. In these days of astrologers and clairvoyants credulity is as acute as ever, and, as the cynics say, "A sucker is born every minute."

So far I have said nothing about the historical aspect of the Stock Exchange. Frankly, though, this does not seem as interesting as the present state of affairs. One might refer to the fact that the present building was opened in March 1802 with some five hundred subscribers; one might add that before this the brokers and jobbers met at a coffee-house called New Jonathan's; one might trace the origin of stock-jobbing to the need of the Dutch and other foreigners for agents on the spot. But I personally am much more interested to be told that the three leading firms of stockbrokers are Mullens, Marshall, Steer, Lawford & Co., R. Nivision & Co., and J. & A. Scrimgeour & Co. And it was a real experience to stand in Shorter's Court after 4 p.m. and hear jobbers round you shouting prices, while a pleasant-faced flower-seller tried to get rid of her last bunch of carnations, and one or two youths poured confetti on the craniums of bald-headed brokers from an upper window. You felt almost like a stockbroker yourself without any danger of your hat being trampled on or strangers asking you with dangerous politeness what your hurry was.

That is an experience that anybody can have while the boom lasts. And long may it do so, say I, though so far, to my great surprise, the Stock Exchange has not yet begun to deal in the shares of the company into which I recently formed myself.

Still, I cannot complain.

Nobody has asked it to do so.

## CHAPTER XXXV

### WONDERS OF THE INSURANCE WORLD

THE growth of insurance in this country is the most remarkable of all the financial developments of the past forty years. Take the matter of fire insurance. The gross amount insured against fire even in 1929 was no less than £2,269,697,778, which is £1,000,000,000 more than it was seventeen years ago.

Fires, of course, are frequent and sometimes devastating. The damage to Madame Tussaud's in 1925 was £250,000, and the Victoria Dock in 1923 suffered to the tune of a round million. But our great insurance companies do not confine themselves, of course, to British property. When the famous earthquake at San Francisco took place in 1906 the London Assurance had to pay out £1,400,000, the Royal £1,350,000, the London and Lancashire £1,000,000. Eight others had to pay out more than £700,000, and seven others had to pay out more than £350,000. In the case of the Japanese earthquake in 1923 the actual loss was estimated at £200,000,000 and the insurance at £175,000,000. British offices, however, disclaimed liability, presumably on the grounds that it was "an act of God"—a phenomenon of which there has never been a satisfactory definition. Later, though, they made an *ex gratia* payment of the current year's premiums.

The original kind of insurance was marine. England, being a nation that depends on her sea communications and her imports and exports, soon found that it was necessary to insure against loss by storm and shipwreck. Within living memory the composite insurance offices of to-day were transacting either fire and life insurances or confined them-

selves to some particular kind of business. Since then amalgamations have become the order of the day, and these big offices are doing every kind of business, from insuring you against straining an ankle in Switzerland to loss from the absconding of a fraudulent bank clerk. It is not until one realizes how many kinds of insurances there are that it is possible to get any kind of grip on the situation. So I had better enumerate a few of them.

Alphabetically, a start is with accidents (personal) and disease. Then come accountants' indemnity, agricultural tractors, annuities, immediate or deferred, art property, and aviation. Take the Bs—you have baggage, bloodstock, boilers, and burglary. Take F with fidelity guarantees, foot-and-mouth disease, forged transfers, and furriers' indemnities. The G section reminds you that a golfer can insure against his golf clubs being stolen. Then you find that you can insure yourself against hailstones, libel, losing your keys, the non-renewal of your licence, and against marriage risks—whatever they are. A mariner can insure against the loss of his certificate, builders can insure against their cranes falling. Other sections are missing documents, missing beneficiaries, petrol-pump installations, refrigerating plant, riot and civil commotion, storm and tempest, sprinkler leakage, and wireless. You can insure against losing registered letters in the post, against having your plate-glass windows smashed or cut, as well as all the ordinary motor-car, tourist, and other risks.

Having given that list, it is hard to know where to begin. Perhaps life insurance is as interesting as any. What intrigued me most when I discussed the business with the General Manager of one of the three largest insurance companies in Great Britain, was to hear that the life of a certain English duke is insured for £400,000. You can probably guess who he is. I saw him a few months ago. The next time I see him I shall gaze at him with more respect than usual.

There are hundreds of men in England whose lives are insured for more than £100,000. It is only when you reach the £200,000 that the numbers start to dwindle. No wonder the deaths column in the newspapers interests the insurance companies, particularly when the medical officer has made a slight error and has passed a man as a good life who promptly dies five weeks later after only one fat instalment. The heads of half a dozen insurance companies will know what I am referring to here.

The biggest bugbears of insurance companies which speculate in life insurance are diabetes and angina pectoris. Speaking very roughly, angina pectoris is an illness of the heart where the pipes conducting the blood get choked up, and the victim dies. The trouble is that the best heart specialist cannot tell for certain whether you are suffering from it, even though your blood pressure ought to be some indication. Ask Harry Preston about this. He told me once that he was refused a life insurance because it was thought that he had a bad heart nearly half a century ago. And he is still with us, as well as ever I am glad to say.

There was another peer whose death cost £300,000 recently, while a man who was insured for a similar sum blew his brains out. In a case of suicide like that, the insurance companies have to pay if some third person has an interest in the policy. It was also decided two years ago in the case of Podmore, the murderer, that his mother, who had effected an insurance on the life of her son, should be entitled to the money, even though it was contrary to public policy to pay the sum assured to anyone claiming under or through a person dying at the hands of justice.

By contrast with these life insurances which run into hundreds of thousands of pounds, there are countless policies effected for as little as £100, and even a few for £50. The truth of the matter is that during the past few years the life-

insurance companies have done better than ever, either in spite of, or more probably because of, the slump. This is a notable testimonial for insurance companies although, per head of the population, we are still very much less insured than Americans, and it is attributed to the Hatry crash, the Kysant affair, and the Wheeler disaster. Business men who feel that they do not want to put any more money into their concerns during the depression increase their life-insurance policies instead, though now this single-premium policy has been discontinued.

The latest kind of insurance which has been instituted to cope with worried husbands is a kind of family insurance which provides, besides a permanent insurance, an additional benefit of a temporary character. The principle is that if the husband dies in the first twenty years, an income is payable to the widow for the remainder of that period. Supposing he was insured for £500 and died in the third year, his widow would get, not only the £500, but also £60 a year for the next seventeen years. If, of course, he does not die inside the first twenty years, his widow gets only the £500 at his ultimate demise. The increased death duties and the increased income-tax are further reasons why life-insurance policies are increasing so fast. A life-insurance policy is, perhaps, the most easily negotiated financial document you can have. On the other hand, the insurance companies consider it a great shame that a life insurance is counted as part of the dead person's estate, and they intend to move heaven and earth to get this altered. But it sounds a trifle optimistic of them.

The most intriguing life insurances of all are those that deal with "compound survivals," as they call them. It needs the higher mathematics and the calculus to determine what the odds are in such cases. The day I spoke to the actuary of a great Insurance Company on this subject he had just been

asked to quote a premium in the case of a client who wanted to insure himself against the risk of three healthy men aged thirty, thirty-two, and thirty-five, dying before a woman of sixty-two. "If I really had worked it out by the integral calculus and fancy mathematics, I might have spent hours over it," he said. "As a matter of fact, in wildly remote cases like this, one is rather inclined just to think of a number and quote it. The actual premium would probably be ten shillings to cover the risk of £1,000, but you have to make it at least seven guineas because the doctor's bills would amount to about five guineas—for the examination, I mean—and there is all the book-work as well. On an average, I or my staff have actually to go into the realms of the calculus and higher mathematics about once a week. You see, we actuaries must always be able to quote out-of-the-way benefits when additional contingencies, such as remarriage and the possible birth of issue, are involved.

"Suppose a man is the tenant, during his lifetime, of an entailed estate which on his death goes to his children, or, failing them, to the next of kin. Suppose, moreover, he is sixty years old, and his wife is the same age, and there are no heirs. Obviously, then, the odds are in favour of the next of kin. Supposing the next of kin want to borrow money on reversion, they will be advised to take out a policy against the treble risk of the first wife dying first, the husband marrying again, and on top of that, of his becoming a father. In a case like that we want to know whether the wife is in good health. That is the major consideration. The classical case of this concerns an Irish peer who remarried at the age of eighty and became a father at the age of eighty-two. No doubt you know whom I mean. But that, I say, is the classical case of a long shot coming off, for the next of kin all insured against this extremely improbable contingency."

When I suggested to him that in the case of compound

survivals the widespread popularity of motor-cars made it quite possible for a whole family to be wiped out in a single accident, the actuary laughed. "It is quite true," he said, "that the motor-car has introduced an entirely new element of risk into our lives, just as the aeroplane has done. But you must remember that far less port is drunk nowadays, and I should say that this more than counterbalances motor-cars. Besides, you must remember that the medical world has got tuberculosis more or less under control. As for cancer, it is very much a problem whether it is really increasing as fast as might be supposed. Many people think that it is no more prevalent than before, and that it is merely a question of more doctors diagnosing wasting diseases by that name. There is no doubt at all that the public expectation of life is lengthening every year. This is due primarily to better sanitation, better medical advice, and the fact that the services of doctors and nurses are now available for a lower stratum of the population than ever before. The fact that children's teeth are dealt with in the schools is also of paramount importance, for you must remember that we are dealing with mass statistics."

I next spoke to the general manager of an insurance company. "Some people," he said sadly, "seem to regard insurance as money paid away for which they must necessarily get something back. That is not reasonable. The real principle of insurance is that it is an indemnity. So that if you have a loss and are insured you are neither a gainer nor a loser. Life insurance is undoubtedly the finest form of saving extant. If a man can guarantee to live until the date he decides upon—well and good. But even then, will he save? The chances are that if he wants to buy a motor-car he will stop saving; whereas if he has already paid a number of premiums on his life, he feels he must go on so as not to lose either the whole or the part of his disbursements."

He then went on to tell me that the largest number of life

insurances extant are all on the King. These possibly amount to as much as £15,000,000. Needless to say, the vast majority of them are transacted on behalf of business people who are in no way connected with the Royal Family. They realize, however, that King George is integral to the British Empire, and his popularity is such that if he had not survived his illness four years ago business would have been at a standstill. Take a draper, for example, just before Christmas. He must of necessity insure himself against the risk of his stocks being left entirely on his hands in such an eventuality; or take a theatrical producer who is putting on a pantomime. He, too, must insure himself.

The amount of short-term insurance on the late King Edward's life was immense just before his death. When the Bournemouth centenary occurred this general manager was asked to insure his life for six months. But the market was so full that he could only do it at a rate of £5 per cent. The premium was paid, and King Edward died. No doubt the Bournemouth doctors knew the state of his health, for this was a terrific premium to pay over six months.

The reason why the King's life is so heavily insured is because very many deeds are drawn up which apply only to the life of certain members of the Royal Family. I forget how many descendants Queen Victoria now has, but the phrase, "Members of the Royal Family," means in insurance circles the immediate family, sons, daughters, sisters, uncles, aunts (if any), brothers (if any), and grandchildren of the reigning sovereign. Thus Lord Carisbrooke would have counted as a member of the Royal Family while Queen Victoria was alive, but he does not do so to-day. At the present moment very few insurances of this particular type are being transacted. One final note about life insurance is that the companies operate on a margin of 22 per cent. more expectation of life than they allow for in their policies. This,

however, rises to 30 per cent. and even 40 per cent. in the case of teetotallers. I am surprised that brewers and wine merchants do not come out with a slogan, "Drink, and don't let the insurance companies wax fat at your expense."

It is obviously impossible to cover more than a trifle of the fringe of this vast subject. But I must make some reference to the Employers' Liability in this country. Most of the insurance companies consider it badly arranged when compared with the rule in Belgium, where, if an employee is permanently injured, he is given an annuity instead of a lump sum down. In England it often happens that a man is given the lump sum, starts up a shop, goes bankrupt, and is then on the Poor Law.

Finally, one comes to the Pluvius policy, as they call the insurances against rain. During a long conversation with a young man who controls them in this country, and, indeed, all over the world, a number of entertaining facts and figures emerged. Thus, the Meteorological Office's definition of a rainy day in this country sets the very high standard of there being as little as  $\cdot 01$  of an inch. This was found to be impracticable for a basis of insurance, and so  $\cdot 1$  of an inch was set as the measurement, which is equivalent to not more than two hours' rainfall. In the case of lawn-tennis and cricket matches, this is not practicable, as there may have been such heavy rainfall on the previous night that play is impossible. So the policy is based on whether the programme is carried out or not.

It is even more difficult to define what is meant by fog when the question of insurance arises. But the usual procedure is to consider a foggy day any day when the fog signals are used on the railways. It would obviously be unbusinesslike to leave it to the assured person to say "it was not fine." In this country a third of all the weather-premiums are involved during June. The usual duration of the insured period in

this country is eight hours, which can be chosen by the man who is paying the premium. In Switzerland the usual duration is two hours in the summer. It is impossible to insure snow in Switzerland, because there are no proper statistics or records, as everybody knows who has gone out there when the Berne office says there are two feet of snow at the resort he has chosen, and then finds there are less than two inches.

This young man, on behalf of his company, insures the weather all over the world, so what he loses on the swings he makes up on the roundabouts. It impresses one as being rather incredible that promoters of bullfights in South America look up at the sky on a rainy day when attendance is poor and rub their hands at the thought of this young man in London. The heaviest risk on a single day that he undertakes is for £8,000 at the Stade Roland Garros in Paris, when the French equivalent of the Hendon Air Pageant is staged.

Perhaps the Travel Association of Great Britain would like to know that the weather in Paris is less than 10 per cent. better than it is in London, although many people seem to think that they are going to swelter in the tropics when they go across the Channel. Two or three Christmases ago a heavy claim had to be paid at Malta because it rained steadily on the day of the annual football match between the Navy and the Town. In Italy there is any amount of business done by this young man in insuring fine weather for football matches and open-air opera.

When these Pluvius policies were inaugurated ten years ago, all kinds of stunts were tried. It has now settled down to a steady business on the most prosaic lines, based on the meteorological statistics from 1881 to 1915. Although the insurance company is aware that weather runs in cycles, it is impossible to take it into account.

By experience and statistics, it has been found that June

and September in this country are the driest months, and so the cheapest premiums are then in vogue. Oddly enough, February, despite its nickname of Filldyke, is usually a fine month, and the premiums are lower than in March. November is usually a good month, too. By contrast, August is so bad that the premiums are only 5 per cent. lower than they are in January. Speaking generally, this young man has weather policies operating throughout the world 320 days in the year.

## CHAPTER XXXVI

### THE PLACE OF STRANGE RECORDS

IT is one of the curiosities of the Civil Service that if you look up Somerset House in the telephone directory you will only find a laundry of that name—and yet in the files of Somerset House you can discover all the dirty linen in the world carefully docketed away. To the average income-tax payer Somerset House conjures up a truly horrific vision of Inland Revenue Commissioners sitting in judgment on their appeals. But when you meet these heads of departments they are quite human.

Sir James Grigg, the small, lean, brilliant Chairman of the Inland Revenue, is a member of the Hellenic Travellers' Society. We went on the same cruise round the Eastern Mediterranean two years ago. On one occasion he vouchsafed the fact that there is an Englishman who paid £1,250,000 in income-tax and £750,000 in super-tax last year. I call that a very interesting admission. When I went to Somerset House I could find no one to bear out the popular theory that 60 per cent. of income-tax payers pay too much and that 40 per cent. pay too little. But at the offices of the Registrar of Births, Deaths, and Marriages I acquired a number of statistics.

Those of the people who officially register a change in their sex were rather diverting. Nine times out of ten these alterations in sex registrations are of women, or rather girls, who find that they are males. There is only one known instance of a change of sex after the age of twenty. They usually occur round about the age of fourteen, fifteen, and sixteen. As I say, the "men" who find that they are women are excessively rare.

In the archives of the Registrar-General are no fewer than 150,000,000 records of marriages, deaths, and births. Every year this vast number is added to by about 1,500,000. Underneath the vast forecourt of Somerset House there are vaults stuffed with records. But they are filed with such German thoroughness that a staff of twelve men is all that is necessary to whip out a name at ten minutes' notice. One of the more interesting statistics in this department is that while the birth-rate and death-rate have both decreased in a remarkable way, the marriage-rate is as great as ever, and continues to increase every year. The present average is more than 360,000 marriages annually. This compares with a drop in the birth-rate from 1,000,000 a year to 650,000, and in the death-rate from 610,000 in 1918 (quite part from our casualties in France) to 450,000. It is safe to say that the dole has been largely responsible for this, and next year a distinct decrease may be noticeable following the cuts in unemployment benefit.

Two of the more important activities of the same department are legitimacy and adoption. In 1926 two laws were passed which gave a great deal of extra work to Somerset House. The Legitimacy Law made it possible for parents to legitimize children born before their marriage within three months after that date, for 3s. 7d. The cost rises to 10s. thereafter. In 1927 nearly 6,000 legitimations were registered. Since then the files show a steady level of 4,000 a year. Only an expert can tell the difference between the birth certificate of a child born legitimately and one of an illegitimate child who has since been legitimized. Scotland used to have the word "illegitimate" printed right across a birth certificate, and until this custom was abolished a number of perfectly respectable people used to commit suicide every year when they suddenly discovered that their parents had not been married.

It is the same with the new law governing adoption. A man who becomes the father of a child born to a married woman who is not his wife can adopt the child. A certificate of adoption is granted, and nobody is ever allowed to see the original birth certificate again.

Since the Russell case it is no longer possible for a father or mother to give evidence which will bastardize their child. This, however, is a trifle awkward for the Registrar-General, considering that the declaration of a woman about her child is on oath and subject to the Perjury Act.

"We are busy people," the Assistant Registrar at Somerset House summed up, "but we never start a hare. Registration affords proof of fact and existence. It goes no further. When a man adopts his own child it acquires a quasi-legitimate status even though it cannot be actually legitimized. The public no longer considers that the biblical warning against 'counting the people' holds good; 180 years ago the feeling was so strong that the census had to be abandoned."

Before the sixteenth century, with the exception of *Domesday Book*, no statistical documents of any importance existed. Data were so uncertain that guesses at the population varied by as much as 100 per cent. These estimates were based either on Poll Tax of 1577 or the Hearth Money, a species of household tax in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. It has been estimated that the population of England at the end of the fourteenth century was between 2,500,000 and 3,000,000 people. It is certain that the population did not increase rapidly until the last quarter of the eighteenth century. After various efforts to analyse the numbers and quality of the public the census of 1841 took place. At last information was demanded about the age, sex, and occupation of the individual. People born in the district were separated from others not so born, and foreigners were distinguished from natives. Until this census there was no onus on the

householder to provide the needed details, and with slight improvements and additions, this system has remained in force ever since.

In the following table is an entertaining excerpt from "a collection of yearly bills of mortality, 1657-1758 inclusive." So far as I can make out, these statistics refer solely to what would now be described as Greater London.

A COMPLETE RECORD OF ALL METROPOLITAN  
CASUALTIES IN THE YEAR 1667-68, ACCORDING  
TO THE REPORT MADE TO CHARLES II

*Diseases and Casualties*

Aged . . . . .	862
Ague . . . . .	21
Apoplexy . . . . .	20
Bedridden . . . . .	4
Bleeding . . . . .	5
Bloody flux and flux . . . . .	86
Bursten . . . . .	1
Cancer, gangrene, and fistula . . . . .	47
Canker and thrush . . . . .	93
Childbed . . . . .	271
Chrisomes . . . . .	417
Cold and cough . . . . .	14
Colick and wind. . . . .	55
Consumption and tissick . . . . .	2,856
Convulsion . . . . .	1,417
Cut of the stone . . . . .	1
Distracted . . . . .	6
Dropsy and tympany . . . . .	948
Drowned . . . . .	68
Executed . . . . .	12
Fever . . . . .	1,247

Flox and small pox . . . . .	1,987
Found dead in the streets, etc. . . . .	6
Frighted . . . . .	1
Gout . . . . .	7
Green sickness . . . . .	1
Grief . . . . .	12
Gripping in the guts . . . . .	2,415
Hanged or made away with themselves	16
Headmouldshot . . . . .	1
Imposthume . . . . .	122
Infants . . . . .	334
Jaundies . . . . .	71
Killed by several accidents . . . . .	69
King's evil . . . . .	39
Leprosy . . . . .	1
Lethargy . . . . .	6
Livergrown . . . . .	1
Lunatick . . . . .	2
Megrimis . . . . .	3
Measles . . . . .	200
Murdered . . . . .	10
Overlaid . . . . .	59
Palsy . . . . .	19
Plague . . . . .	14
Planet . . . . .	2
Pleurisy . . . . .	10
Poisoned . . . . .	3
Quinsy . . . . .	13
Rickets . . . . .	252
Rising of the lights . . . . .	175
Running of the reins . . . . .	1
Rupture . . . . .	13
Scowring . . . . .	72
Scurvy . . . . .	31

Slain . . . . .	1
Sores, ulcers, broken and bruised limbs .	49
Spleen . . . . .	3
Spotted fever . . . . .	148
Starved . . . . .	1
Stone . . . . .	35
Strangury . . . . .	10
Stoppage of the stomach . . . . .	232
Suddenly . . . . .	48
Surfeit . . . . .	438
Swine pox . . . . .	3
Teeth . . . . .	1,077
Vomiting . . . . .	95
Worms . . . . .	101
Wounded . . . . .	2

Christened : Males, 6,073 ; females, 5,560 ; in all, 11,633. Buried : Males, 9,111 ; females, 8,167 ; in all, 17,278. Of the Plague, 14. Increased in the burials this year, 1,436 ; decreased of the Plague, 21. Parishes clear of the Plague, 41 ; parishes infected, 6.

To-day doctors are given instructions to be a good deal more explicit. Old age is not considered an adequate diagnosis of death, and in many other instances the doctor must be extremely explicit.

It cannot be often that a correction in the death certificate is made at Somerset House, but the officials there have thousands of requests every year to have an alteration made in a birth certificate. Altogether, there are 300 people employed on the permanent staff, and there is also a floating army of clerks which fluctuates between 200 and 500, to deal with the census.

Sometimes illegitimate people try to arrange to have them-

selves legitimized although their parents are dead. This is not easy. People who wish to have their change of sex officially registered take up a lot of time proving their identity with that of the child whom they represent themselves to be. Certificates of doctors and statutory declarations are essential. The ardours and endurances of census taking were made all the greater by the Local Government Act in 1929. Vast changes in boroughs and counties were made. The re-division of the areas and the alteration of units were far-reaching. With the abolition of the Local Guardians, their areas also disappeared. Some counties have adopted the Guardians' areas as the basis of their subsequent relief schemes. But the work has been increased immensely for Somerset House. Worcester used to have little bits all over the countryside. Since 1929 they have been incorporated in adjacent counties.

It is only a few yards away across the forecourt to the Probate section of Somerset House. Even the Keeper of the Records did not know how many probates and Letters of Administration with the Will annexed are granted every year. Later I discovered that in 1931 the non-contentious grants amounted to 67,000, an increase of 5,000 on the previous year. What he told me, though, was that a remarkably high proportion of the people who die in a given year do so in the winter, with the result that February and March are extremely busy times, allowing for the six weeks or three months for the legalities following a death; whereas May, June, and July are very slack.

He also told me that filed away in the vaults beneath the main terrace overlooking the Embankment are thousands upon thousands of soldiers' wills made on active service. They are made on the strangest bits of paper. Others are records of purely oral wills. Every year more and more ex-soldiers die, and then dependants come along to search the records for their wills. Outside in the office itself I spoke to one of the

clerks who has been there a number of years. He said that the average number of people who come each day to pay their shilling and have a look at a will is between 300 and 400. "Sometimes they come in looking most jovial," he said, "and they may go out with their tails between their legs. Others will come in looking rather hopeless and go out with a broad grin on their faces. You never can tell."

I may add that the shilling entitles you to look at records for the past five years. It costs you another shilling to go five years further back, and a guinea to have all the files thrown open to your investigation. Any number of the people who pay their shillings are professional searchers and sometimes, no doubt, they find more than they want.

Another few yards and you find yourself in the Income Tax Inspector's Department. The Civil Servants installed here are all specialists and must be ready to answer telephone calls from local inspectors who are in doubt as to proper procedure in tricky cases. For the sake of argument, a woman who earns her livelihood by taking long aeroplane flights may furnish no little doubt when the question of her allowable expenses is concerned. If the Prime Minister wanted to argue his income-tax the matter would probably be transferred to the tender care of Somerset House from Cornwall House.

But let us leave this gloomy subject for the moment and turn to the Controller of Stamps. The number of stamps at Somerset House is legion. That is a lot of stamps. In the boom year of 1928-9, when companies were formed right and left, the receipts were as high as £30,000,000.

The Stamp Controller, Mr. F. Greenwood, has a signature known to every company promoter, for he is also the Registrar of Companies. Every year, he tells me, about 8,000 new companies are formed. Despite the depression, there has been little decrease in their numbers, though the average

amount of the capital has depreciated very considerably. This is partly due to the increased stamp duties. In 1880 a company was formed with a nominal capital of £100,000,000. At the other end of the scale is a company founded in 1924 with a capital of one halfpenny, divided into a couple of farthing shares. It was a company formed by an auctioneer and his wife. In actual fact it did not save him any more than if he had started with a hundred-pound company. The stamp duty and other fees would have been exactly the same.

Led by Mr. Greenwood, I walked down to the vaults, where the files of the companies are kept. It was like a gigantic wine-cellar with canvas-backed registers instead of bottles of wine to line the walls. The men employed downstairs climb up to the topmost shelves just like monkeys and without the aid of the usual ladders. The speed with which a company file is brought to you on payment of a shilling is really phenomenal. I asked to see my own company, which was registered last March. I timed the man, and it reached me in three-quarters of a minute, although its number was 263,249. Proud of this achievement, the head man of this department asked me whether I would like to name any number and see how long it would take to reach me. I said "999"—one more than the doctor's request—and within two minutes he told me that this company was defunct in 1912, and its records stored in a strong room.

"We have records of more than 250,000 companies," Mr. Greenwood told me. "We have eight miles of files, and every year we use up another quarter of a mile. Here are the records of one of our leading bands. This is merely the annual statement of 1931. You will see that it takes up 12 sq. ft. Upstairs we have the files of a soap company, which are the largest in Somerset House. Every year they encroach by another 20 sq. ft.

"The Companies Act was passed in 1856. Our records

date back from the previous year. We no longer have the files of the first four companies in this section of our vaults. But here is No. 5, the oldest English company to be registered which is still alive. As you can see, it is the Thornbury Gas Light & Coke Company."

We went upstairs to a room where a number of clerks were tying up files. They use a special sextuple slip-knot which I tried for some minutes to achieve. They do 1,000 of these a day. In another room a Welshman, who at night is a well-known B.B.C. entertainer, was dictating the names and addresses of the new companies registered three days before. Eight clerks were noting them down in big index books.

"On an average about 150 new companies are registered every week," Mr. Greenwood went on. "They vary in number from twenty to sixty a day. We still have a lot of space now used as store-rooms into which we can extend later on."

Later on he told me how there are fashions in companies. Seven years ago any number of companies were registered in connexion with greyhound racing. Many of them are already dead. Women who start laundries and hat-shops also have a penchant for turning themselves into companies.

Mr. Greenwood refused to be drawn when I tried to persuade him to tell me how many companies in his opinion are started purely for the purpose of evading income-tax. "I cannot possibly make any comment on that," he said. His assistant also said that any idea he might have on the subject would be based on personal rather than official knowledge. The average company promoter surrounds himself with such a cloud of commercial possibilities that it is difficult to know offhand what he really intends to do or what the true objects of his company are.

Of stamps, to quote Father O'Flynn, he has a charming

variety. The stamps affixed on medicine bottles alone range in value from 3d. and 6d. up to £1. Altogether there are twelve kinds of adhesive stamps, counting postage stamps as only one species.

But there is no room to describe in detail all the activities of Somerset House, the vaults of which bulge and extend almost visibly every day to receive the ever-growing avalanche of documents and records. Suffice it to say that Sir James Grigg as Chairman of the Board of Inland Revenue is in control of the Estates Duties, Legacy Duties, and Succession Duties, which are comprised under Death Duties of income-tax, sur-tax, and stamps, as well as of one or two archaic taxes like the land-tax, which must not be confused with the property tax, and amounts to a bare £500,000 a year.

His primary job is the administration of the Inland Revenue duties under the statutes. Under him is a corps of Revenue specialists in the various branches who issue instructions on which local inspectors act and supply information for the Chancellor of the Exchequer's next Budget. Over and above all this are the departments of the Registrar-General, the Probate, and the Post Office, to whom various parts of the ancient building have been sub-let by the Inland Revenue, and over whom it has no control. Over and above all this is the flight of several thousand starlings who chatter for nearly a fortnight on the roof-tops of Somerset House before their annual migration to warmer climes.

If they had to pay our income-tax or death duties they would disappear and never return.

## CHAPTER XXXVII

### £ s. d. OF A RACECOURSE

AT Kempton not long ago a burly Irish peer said to me, "Why don't you write about this terrible charge of two pounds eight shillings for a single day's racing?" He was referring, of course, to the day's membership badge for a man, which certainly seemed a lot of money; especially when you compare the prices charged for admission in England with those on the Continent. Well, it seemed a problem worth probing. Now I have done so, and you can quite understand why you have to pay this amount. But mind you, if you become a member for £12 a year and take two women friends each day for a day's racing at Kempton, it works out at only 5s. a head, which is cheaper than anywhere else in the world.

Apart from that, the figures I have been given completely justify the apparently high charge for these membership badges. Let us take Kempton as a typical first-class race-course. It only has sixteen days' racing a year. That is all that the Jockey Club will grant it. Of these, eight days are under the National Hunt rules during the autumn and winter, and there is always a likelihood that one or two of them will have to be suspended owing to bad weather. Here at once we come to a figure of £700 a year which has to be paid in insurance against this kind of thing. This, however, does not really cover the expenses of the police and staff if the racing is abandoned on the actual morning itself, for they all have to be paid whether or not they have anything to do once they are down there. The police bill alone comes to £1,600 a year, at the rate of 28s. per constable per day.

The wage bill of the staff amounts to over £3,000 a year. Next time you go racing just try and count the number of gatemen, turnstile men, ticket sellers, and the like. They cost another £2,200 a year, for I use the word "staff" merely to include the labourers, painters, and other manual workers. Think of the cost of spraying three and a half miles of race-course during a dry summer. Fortunately, Kempton has its own artesian wells and so does not have to pay a water rate, which might otherwise be colossal. The cost of merely watering the course comes to £400. If you analyse the gross total of repairs and upkeep, which comes to £4,000, you will find that the fences and jumps alone cost £300 a year. Then think of the soil and the grass that has to be put down. The soil alone may amount to 700 tons of stuff (good enough for gardening) which has to be harrowed in until it is quite out of sight. All the lawns, shrubs, and trees also have to be kept spick-and-span. The gardening bill is a big one. When Philip of Spain came to England with a view to marrying Queen Elizabeth he planted many foreign trees, and four or five of the original Spanish chestnuts are to be found to-day at Kempton Park.

Already you are beginning to understand that to own or to have shares in a racecourse is not all "beer and skittles." It would not occur to you perhaps that all the straw and hay for the racehorses competing is provided free, as well as the accommodation for their lads. That alone comes to £400 or £500. Moreover, each loose box, at any rate at Kempton, is fumigated with sulphur candles to make quite sure that no epidemic of coughing can be traced to that source.

All told, Kempton has 312 acres, an area as large as, or larger than, Hurst Park, Sandown, and Alexandra Park put together. The result is £4,000 for rates and taxes. The taxes in this case do not include the entertainment tax, which

comes to nearly another £9,000. Already a big hole, as you can see, is being made in your possible profits. An even bigger one—in fact, the biggest—is your added money. It does not matter how large your grandstand or how attractive the scenery. If you do not get good racing you are not going to get the crowds; nor are you going to get good racing unless you get good horses, and, obviously, you are not going to get good horses unless you give good prizes. The total stake money provided by Kempton is no less than £26,750 during its sixteen days of racing in the year. Three thousand of this is given to one race—the great Jubilee Handicap. Kempton has always attracted for this expensive reason the best handicappers in the country. The very first Jubilee Handicap was won by the famous Bendigo, who carried nine stone seven pounds, and was so popular a fancy that his success broke dozens of small bookmakers. Since then, many other famous horses have won this race—Santoi, Polar Star, Bachelor's Double, Abbots Speed, and Colorado Kid.

In the same way, the Duke of York Handicap, which is usually run the week before the Cesarewitch, has been won by Sceptre, Donetta, Polymelus, and Pharos (twice).

I only mention these great names to show that you have to pay out great sums of money to attract their owners. A racecourse, in fact, is the perfect example of the old platitude that you have got to spend money to make money, and even then you cannot be sure of it.

Evidently the business of running the racing side of a course, even though it only involves sixteen days in the year of actual racing, is too burdensome to permit of the officials being also responsible for the catering. It takes an expert to do that, particularly as he has to find men—cooks, bartenders, and others—who are available for so few days in the year. In consequence, therefore, I cannot give the figures of what the various bars take, whether it is for food, cham-

pagne, beer, cigars, or cigarettes, for the racecourse company itself only gets a percentage of the takings. Nor can I give the exact figures of the fees paid to the stakeholders, judge, clerk of the course, and the handicappers, but the total of this figure comes to something in the neighbourhood of £2,000.

Advertising, printing of tickets, placards, and stationery come to half-way between £200 and £300. The Jockey Club gets a fee of £120 (though I do not quite know what for). The rent of the estate is £4,000 a year. The general expenses include office rent and clerks' wages, which come to £3,000 if one includes the secretary's salary. The directors' fees are £1,000 a year, and don't forget the band music of the Grenadier Guards, which is £240. All told, the expenditure for the sixteen days' racing is something over £60,000—nearly £4,000 a day.

We now come to the other side of the medal. Against the added money bill of £26,000 you find £14,000 for entrance fees and half surplus of sales. Another gratifying figure is that of £41,000 in receipts for admission to the stands, the paddock, and the use of the car park. There is also a matter of £3,400 for the bookmakers' badges. These vary in price from £3 a day in Tattersall's to 10s. in the cheapest ring, and always cause an argument. The sale of race-cards and the proportion of the profits from refreshments is £2,600.

Many people think probably that the racecourse gets some percentage from the Tote. At present it gets nothing, though there is some talk of a nominal proportion being handed over. So far, however, it is still all talk. The revenue from the club membership is £10,000 a year, though much of the gilt is taken off this particular gingerbread, as it is in the case of the admission fees, by the entertainment tax. This, I have already told you, amounts in all to nearly £9,000.

Well, there you are. A profit of something like £6,000

is made on the year's racing. When you consider that the new stands erected two years ago cost £90,000, it is not such a lot of money, is it?

No wonder that the executives would like the Jockey Club to give them another two days' racing a year. The upkeep would be the same, while the admission money and book-makers' badges would make a real difference. But the Jockey Club is very autocratic, and at least Kempton can be grateful for the extra day's racing granted to it on the Royal Bank Holiday. And, autocratic though the Jockey Club may be, it is a great deal better to be dictated to by a body of men so vitally interested in racing than by local authorities. Look what has happened to dog racing.

Well, I hope I have proved my point. Those of you who go racing at Kempton, and have not had the wisdom to become members and thus have to pay the £2 8s. yourself and the £1 4s. for your lady, may now feel that after all this charge is not unjustified.

## CHAPTER XXXVIII

### GOLDEN NOTES

ONE of the most delightful fallacies which still gain currency is that music, like the umbrella industry, is a bankrupt career. Thousands of people still regard musicians as poor people who only think of their art, and who automatically expect to starve. In actual fact, the big artists make far more money than the biggest film stars, and music, having ceased to be an art, is now an industry.

One can attribute the revival of music (by which I mean classical music as opposed to dance music) to broadcasting; and yet the B.B.C., if the truth be known, has defeated its own object. By stimulating interest in music it has created an interest in musical realities, whereas the mechanical side of it is, vulgarly speaking, going down the drain. With the exception of classical music and those made by star artists, the sale of gramophone records has dropped a great deal recently. By contrast, the sale of pianos, which was stagnant for years, has shot up again.

How far the revival in music has its origin in snobbery I do not know. It is a fact that the English public like to say that they have heard the musical celebrity of the moment, and invariably applaud even when that celebrity sings flat or sharp. Indeed, the number of people who can tell when an artist is singing slightly out of tune seems to be remarkably small. Whether or not musical snobbery is the cause, the fact remains that to-day it is a paying proposition to take the big stars of the concert world all over the country on tour; whereas ten years ago only Manchester, Glasgow, Edinburgh, Liverpool, and Birmingham were able to show a profit for

the daring impresario. To-day London—and after London, Great Britain—has become the Mecca of the great artists instead of New York and Buenos Aires. For in addition to those five cities, the regular tour of musical celebrities now includes Bristol, Brighton, Dundee, Dublin, Belfast, Sheffield, Leicester, Newcastle, and Middlesbrough. Of these places Newcastle gives the warmest welcome, and Middlesbrough is well up the list. This is extraordinary when you realize that these two towns, like Sheffield, are in depressed areas. Nevertheless, Harold Holt can afford to send Gigli to all of them. Leicester, on the other hand, is the ugly duckling of the provincial musical world, despite the fact that it has seven or eight industries and is extremely prosperous. Last time Harold Holt lost £1,000 on the season there.

To-day New York has to play second fiddle to London and to Buenos Aires, for both offer more cash to musicians, although it is the Metropolitan Opera House of New York which has set the financial seal on the success of so many great artists. In dealing with these personages I put Gigli, Kreisler, Yehudi Menuhin, Lily Pons, John McCormack, the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, and Tauber in the first flight, as being capable, each one of them, of filling the Albert Hall; and Horowitz, Piatigorsky, and Conchita Supervia in the second flight of big stars, being each of them capable of filling the Queen's Hall to capacity, which holds 2,000 people compared with the 8,000 of the Albert Hall. All of them make tremendous money.

Gigli makes an average of £500 a night, and probably sings 270 times a year. This comes to a matter of £135,000, on top of which you may add the £15,000 or £20,000 a year he makes out of gramophone records. So far, the great Italian tenor has refused to make a talking picture, but I learn that he has just agreed to do a "special" for a news reel at an unspecified but automatically fabulous fee.

Gigli is one of the celebrities who insist on a flat salary as opposed to a percentage. Kreisler, Yehudi Menuhin, and the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra work on a percentage, which is invariably the thick end of the stick. Thus Kreisler receives 65 per cent. of the gross takings and makes a matter of £2,000 in an evening.

Lily Pons gets £400 to £450 a concert. John McCormack wants the earth, and gets almost as much as Gigli. Tauber receives between £300 and £350. Having gone into pictures, he finds that it is the easiest thing in the world to earn £1,500 a week in addition; and following the success of *Blossom Time* no doubt his price will go up further.

One aspect of the invasion of foreign artists in the concert world is that the Chancellor of the Exchequer gets a series of small windfalls out of them. If Gigli, for example, is singing here seventeen times, for which he will receive about £8,500, the Exchequer will benefit to the tune (the exact word, I fancy) of £2,100. The same occurs relatively with the others—though, poor dears, I do not suppose they yet realize it. In addition, of course, they benefit the Exchequer indirectly through the entertainment tax. At the lowest estimate Harold Holt's musical programme is worth £10,000 to the Government apart from the actual income-tax already referred to.

I am not at liberty to give the figure at which Mr. Holt leases the Albert Hall. But with 1,000 people standing, he cannot hope to make a gross profit of more than £300, and even then the office expenses have to be reckoned with. The Queen's Hall can take £800 when full to capacity, and costs £75 an evening. In addition, there is a curious charge made for collecting the entertainment tax. The impresario also has to budget for at least £250 worth of advertising. On the other hand, he will probably make a profit of £100 out of the programme. If, as in the case of Gigli, he pays the

artist £500 for the night's work, he clears only about £75 gross on the deal.

At this point one might give the order of relative drawing capacity of the various musical celebrities. First on the list come the front-rank violinists, followed closely by tenors. Big orchestras, like the Berlin Philharmonic, come third; sopranos and pianists are fourth and fifth; basses, baritones, and 'cellists bring up the rear.

Harold Holt used to be with the late Lionel Powell, but retired from partnership with him some time ago. When Mr. Powell died, it looked as though big music would also die in this country. Indeed, Kreisler and McCormack came over to England expressly to tell Harold Holt that they would never appear on the concert platform again in England unless he represented them. Considering how little money he makes out of it, it was quite patriotic of him to stage the come-back that he has. For every time they come over the big shots want more money. Thus, Pachmann for years was never paid more than £40 a concert. Harold Holt has letters, admittedly written a long time ago, from Kreisler asking for 5 guineas, and being refused. Nor are these celebrities satisfied nowadays merely with the fee.

Many of them want a great deal of their transport paid for them. Thus Gigli (I keep on quoting him because he opened the autumn season in 1934) has all his train fares paid in this country. It is noticeable that he, like the other stars, invariably travels by train as opposed to road. But who would go by car and risk a smash when he is making such a fortune as all the concert stars are doing to-day? For Music, with a capital M, invariably means Money, also with a capital M; and golden notes go double. Which is why the music stars are no longer temperamental. They are business men and business women, and temperament does not pay in Big Business.

## CHAPTER XXXIX

### SIMPLY COINING MONEY

IN two days I have seen so much money of all denominations that I am completely dazed. I have seen banknotes hanging up to dry as if they were so much laundry. The sight and sound of silver coins spouting out of machines like a silver fountain have hypnotized me. When I went into the Diamond Market at Antwerp and saw Assyrian-looking merchants producing thousands of pounds' worth of stones from their waistcoat pockets, trouser pockets, and elsewhere, it seemed the ultimate El Dorado. But I had not then been to the Royal Mint or to the banknote factory at New Malden. Even now I have been unable to obtain permission to see the Bank of England's printing works at St. Luke's in Clerkenwell, although I have a cousin who is a director of the Bank of England. It appears that you must get a permit from Mr. Skinner or Mr. Norman himself, and this might have taken a lifetime to achieve—dodging up ships' gangways or travelling in the tube. But I have seen Scottish banknotes being made, and English 10s. stamps, and Lloyds Bank cheque-books, and paper currency being manufactured for foreign countries all over the world, as well as the Federated Malay States. And I cannot tell you how fascinating it is to see bundles of bank-notes being printed and stacked in their hundreds of thousands.

It is hard, really, to know where to begin. But we might start with the interesting statistic that an ounce of standard silver is spread over 10s. (precisely 122·1 pence) nowadays, and with the market price of silver slumped to about 1s. 6d. an ounce, you find by deduction that 1s. would be

worth about  $1\frac{3}{4}$ d. apart from the copper, zinc, and nickel which form the other half of the metal, and that a half-crown is worth about  $5\frac{1}{2}$ d. This is due entirely to the fact that the actual value of silver has decreased and is not to be ascribed to a debased coinage and still less to the lowering of the coin's internal—although not intrinsic—worth. Until 1919, when the price of silver rose alarmingly, thirty-seven-fortieths of our silver coin was pure silver. To-day it is half-and-half, like the Jugoslavian 20-dinar coins which I saw being minted, and unlike the Polish silver coins, which I also saw being minted, and which are three-fourths the real thing. It is in favour of the bank and to the disadvantage of banknote printers that the low price of silver is causing country after country to withdraw its paper-money of small denominations and to substitute for it a silver coinage. Cases in point are Rumania, Bulgaria, Greece, Turkey, and Jugoslavia, which gave the Mint its latest order for 5,500,000 50-dinar coins.

Tourists are only too pleased, of course, to have solid metal in their hands instead of greasy, torn notes. By the same token, the Bank of France has been minting silver for about four years to take the place of those dreadful 5-franc and 10-franc notes. And, in any case, France, like Germany and Italy, is one of the few countries that do not employ Great Britain to make their notes or their metal currency. The fact that so many lands do so employ us is perhaps the greatest possible testimonial to English workmen and English workmanship. For twenty-five years a private English firm has made all the paper currency for Spain. Even when the Republic was established, and every possible change was made, there was none in the printing of the paper-money. When King Carol succeeded his own son, the Royal Mint was merely told to change the effigy on the coin.

Yes, London and its suburbs make the money for half

the world. Since 1923 the Mint has coined approximately 300,000,000 foreign coins. This excluded the many more millions made annually for the Colonies and Dominions. Thereby hangs a tale. The wily colonials, realizing how cheap silver has become, have been asking the Mint to take back thousands and thousands of pounds' worth of silver coins at face value, and the Mint has been compelled to do so. This action was partly precipitated by the fact that when the War was over and wages had dropped, and unemployment had set in, there was found to be far too much money knocking around, or rather sitting idle in the banks.

It takes a visit to the Mint and a conversation with the Curator to realize fully what is meant by circulation. It needs also a clear mind to differentiate money as money from money as a disc of metal. But admittedly this becomes easier when you see thousands upon thousands of silver coins with no effigies or marks on them being minted and sorted. They look like so many chips at Le Touquet or Deauville, and you easily lose respect for them even though they are made of silver. But the overwhelming impression is one of security and protection from bad coinage and forgers.

You see men throwing out coins for every possible reason. One will sit beside a chute with a revolving drum at the top. You find him, and others like him, in a cubicle reclining with the apparent nonchalance of a Roman Emperor and listening to the tinkle as the coins shoot out at the rate of 100 a minute. His livelihood depends on his hearing. Once every six or seven minutes his sharp ears will detect a false note in the musical cascade, and he grabs the coin from the ever-growing pile. Another sits in front of a magic carpet on which the coins approach him with never-ending relentlessness. He stoops over them, picking them out, hour after hour, for surface defects. Another man stands over a perforated sheet of metal and pushes the unstruck discs over it. Those which

are damaged fall through the perforations. But there are hundreds of others which must be rejected for "spoilage" of one kind or another. I do not know if that is the technical word at the Mint. But it is the one they use at Bradbury, Wilkinson & Co. Ltd., where they make the banknotes at New Malden. Notes are rejected and coins returned to the melting-pot for faults so seemingly insignificant that there is no possible chance of counterfeiting.

One of the biggest orders the Royal Mint has had was for 63,000,000 coins in  $\frac{1}{2}$  roubles and 5 kopeks for Russia. That was in 1924. Idealistically the Soviet wanted to turn its paper currency into coin at one fell swoop, and with the aid of the Royal Mint it did so. Four years ago Greece asked for the minting of 42,000,000 coins—nickel ones of 5 drachmas and silver ones of 10 and 20 drachmas. Rumania, in recent years, has ordered 42,000,000 coins. The order continues, and a further 20,000,000 have been made. In 1928 they wanted some gold coins—a jubilee affair in the form of old-fashioned ducats which were not likely to circulate, but looked nice. Egypt is the only other country which has asked for gold coins in recent years. We ourselves stopped minting sovereigns in 1917, but did a small recoinage of sovereigns in 1925. The practice has stopped. After all, it would be silly to make gold pounds when they are worth thirty-six shillings. After the Free State came into being the Mint made all those silver coins with pigs and fish on them. When I was at the Mint I saw them making 2-centavo pieces for Guatemala. Among the Mint's more recent customers can be counted Irak, Hedjaz, Lithuania, Albania, and Latvia. Special dies and sometimes special machinery have to be made for them. Ceylon indulged in a square coin. The West African halfpenny has a hole in it. You need special tools for that. But Irak coins with the effigy of King Feisal on them have scalloped edges. Those are the very dickens.

But now come with me to the black and white room where they are cooking ingots of silver for Poland. There is a row of ovens with greenish flames peeking out from the "dish covers." Soon you see a huge pot of metal, red hot, being swung across the room on a pulley. A tester takes a spoon, long enough for supping with the devil, and pours out a melted mass like orange curaçao into a pail of water which hisses at the impact. A moment later he pours it into a plate and carefully removes a small amount and does it up into a package. It looks like a lot of crushed walnuts. It has not the slightest resemblance to silver.

Elsewhere in the room you see bars of silver which are coppery in colour. They are a yard or so long, and flat and narrow. When they are spread out on a bench with a workman hammering a distinguishing mark on them, they look in the mass like Vulcan's Xylophone. You wonder what happens to the waste silver, but discover that every ounce of silver in the Mint is checked up and weighed and found to tally before the men can leave work. Why, at a later process, where the discoloured silver is subjected to a bath of diluted sulphuric acid, you are told that the liquid is all returned to store and filtered for the purpose of getting back every scrap of metal.

Soon you see a machine which flattens out the bars of silver to the exact thickness of the destined coin. Nearby is a punching machine which punches out the "blanks," as the coins are called while they are still discs of metal and have no distinguishing mark. The perforated skeleton of the silver bar which is left is called traditionally the "scissel." This also, of course, goes back to the melting-pot. The silver is still greyish in colour when the discs are sifted over the sieve in the process I have already described. Next, the edges are rolled. And so it goes, up to and beyond the point where the coins are weighed and where one in 400 is found to be too

heavy or too light (sometimes they run one way, sometimes the other). In the final room you visit, you see the coins in sacks waiting shipment.

Before the War the Mint made 30,000,000 sovereigns a year. Since the War it has turned a number of them back into gold bars. This is the opposite of what you might expect when you take into account the enormous extent to which gold has cast its shadow upon the whole economic world. But gold has been busy consuming its own tail. There was never any question of reducing the gold content of the sterling pound, although medieval monarchs always did this when they were hard up. It may sound paradoxical, yet, so far from the increased demand for gold resulting in an increased demand for the coin, there has been a huge redundancy of the latter and a steadily increasing demand for gold bars, particularly from the Bank of France.

So much for gold. So far as silver is concerned, we have now withdrawn about £50,000,000 worth of silver minted before 1920. And there is still some £5,000,000 worth or so unaccounted for. When you consider, though, that we have been making silver coin which is still current, for over 100 years, it is a fairly low percentage. The reason for withdrawing it was twofold. On the one hand, as I have said, silver as a metal was reaching ridiculous heights. On the other, by melting down the silver and reissuing it as British coin in a far smaller proportion of silver compared with copper, we were able to sell off the surplus to foreign countries both in bulk and in coin at a very nice profit. The Mint would have to have a very large annual grant from the Government (it employs over 400 skilled craftsmen and workmen) if it were not for its manufacture and export of foreign currencies.

The truth of the matter is that the Mint only mints English money on off-days. What it really likes to do is to mint

money for other countries. The day I was there I bought a brand-new 5s. piece, but no English money was being made. For the Mint must be regarded as an export money-factory which makes tenders and gets contracts from clients in all parts of the world. When it is slack it does the routine job of turning out English currency. During the year 1930 the Mint made nearly 5,000 5s. pieces (chiefly for collectors, because the tradition associating them with dismissal among the lower classes has made them extremely unpopular in trade); 800,000 half-crowns; nearly 6,000,000 florins; something over 3,000,000 shillings; practically 17,000,000 six-pences, and more than 1,250,000 threepenny bits.

It is interesting to record that more than half of the total overseas issue between 1920 and 1930 of these irritating small coins went to New Zealand, where so many worthy Scotsmen flourish and evidently maintain their thrifty traditions. The Mint also made 29,000,000 pennies in 1930, 12,500,000 half-pennies, and no fewer than 4,000,000 farthings. Though the latest statistics are with the printers, and are therefore unobtainable, I understand that the figures for 1934 will show much the same proportion. Who would have thought that so many more florins than half-crowns are needed by the public? For it is all a question of supply and demand. The quantity of farthings is also striking in every sense of the word. The making of fourpenny, threepenny, twopenny, and penny Maundy coins in silver is an interesting historical survival; all told, they amount to about 7,000 annually. The grand total for the year was nearly 200,000,000 coins, which means quite a lot every day if you exclude Sundays and include 46,000 gold coins for abroad.

So much for the Mint, which is always on the look out for big national stabilization orders—of the 40,000,000 variety. Now come with me to New Malden. If a half-crown is worth only 5½d. at face value nowadays, a banknote is not

even worth the  $\frac{1}{2}$ d. worth of paper on which it is printed, except for papering walls, if it can be forged. And so the greatest possible trouble is taken to obtain security. In addition to watermarks the best possible guard against forgers is to have a portrait on the banknote. A properly engraved portrait with its fine lines and living likeness cannot easily be reproduced without the breaking or the thickening of the fine lines, with a consequent alteration to the expression of the face, which attracts attention and immediate exposure.

The Bank of England is singularly old-fashioned, and has no portrait of King George on our pound and ten-shilling notes. At least, though, the notes are no longer printed by photogravure as they were when they were issued by the Treasury a year or two ago. Security being the breath of life of the banknote manufacturer, he will dwell at great length on his efforts to prevent forging. With the continually improving methods of photography—and the banknote forger always works with a camera—the aim of the banknote manufacturer is demonstrably to produce something which offers the greatest possible difficulty to photographic reproduction. This can be achieved only by several different printings in different colours which fog the camera, and prevent the potential forger from separating these printings with the use of colour filters.

Security, security, security ! It sounds fantastic, but it is true that at a banknote factory every inch of paper is counted on arrival, and at the end of each day it has to tally with the amount handed out for printing. Every scrap of waste banknote paper is collected and accounted for. There are checks and double checks all the way. "In every job we do, we assume complete responsibility," one of the directors told me. "When we have finished our printing order we give to the client a balance certificate. On one side of it we show

the amount of paper ordered from the paper manufacturer, together with the latter's certificate. On the other we show how we used it. Now come and see the factory at work." As we went round he showed me specimens of New Zealand notes with a Maori on them, and of Sarawak decorated with the portrait of Rajah Brooke, the White Rajah.

As we walked around, a number of machines were turning out notes for one of the British Colonies. Another was printing scrip. A third was making £20 bonds for a Polish city. A fourth was giving birth to Icelandic 10-kroner notes. A fifth was producing a Spanish aviation issue. In another room a machine giving off a purplish light was surrounded by postage stamps. The light is such that an exposure of five hours to it is equivalent to twenty-four hours of local daylight. Stamps must not change colour.

Elsewhere I saw a machine carving up the page-sheets of banknotes into their final form; a machine which put the gum on stamps. Time and again I had to ask why a particular note was discarded. They all looked marvellous to me. Another girl passed sheet after sheet of banknotes—at the rate of 100 a minute—over an electric lamp to see that the watermark was all right. I got quite dizzy trying to follow her movements. I was told that the paper of which banknotes are made has to be of a strength to withstand 2,000 double folds without breaking. I was told that the engraving is done by specialists who are highly paid. I was told that the smallest order at the factory was for a single bond, while one of the largest was for 1,500,000 bonds for the National Bank of Greece, each two feet across and without a word of English lettering on it. It looked like a banknote when it was completed and had to be made in seventeen different denominations by men who did not know a word of Greek.

The final scene was the wooden boxes of banknotes, sealed,

wired, and ready for transport by lorry to the nearest port. There are many men on each lorry, and they know quite well how to protect themselves and their precious burdens, whose very existence is the greatest possible proof of international belief in Great Britain's security.

## CHAPTER XL

### IF YOU HAD A MILLION

IF you ever ask anybody what he would do with his money if he suddenly became a millionaire, you may be sure that he would say that he would have a good time with it. It is possible, of course, that genuine self-consciousness would prevent him from suggesting that he would give any of it to charity. Yet the fact remains that a lot of money means having a good time to nearly everyone who has not got it at the moment. It is fortunate for the community, therefore, that our richest citizens are almost without exception quite remarkable for their philanthropy. As examples of generous millionairessdom I have chosen six very different types of person whose public benefactions also show distinctive differences. Lord Rothermere, for example, has directed the bulk of his generosity towards education. Lord Wakefield has helped all pioneers of speed. Lady Houston's benefactions have been of a national character. Sir Louis Baron, following in the footsteps of his father, also made the alleviation of suffering his chief objective. Lord Nuffield benefactions have been distributed among local hospitals. The Cadbury family, whom I am treating as a single unit, evidently feel that fresh air and sports grounds are the best media of their generosity. In every case, except those of Lady Houston, Lord Nuffield, and Lord Wakefield, the philanthropy has been used by the philanthropist to give himself the additional pleasure of worthily perpetuating the memory of some member of his family.

Let us take Lord Rothermere first. Lord Rothermere has been abroad, and so I was unable to learn at first hand from him the underlying principle of his generosity. His son, Mr.

Esmond Harmsworth, told me that it was chiefly an interest in the rising generation and to perpetuate the memory of his two sons, Vere and Vivyan, who were killed in the War. A glance at the record of his benefactions proves this quite conclusively. There are exceptions, or rather additions, of course. Some years ago he was immensely impressed by what seemed to him to be the injustice of the Versailles Treaty, particularly towards the Hungarians. As a result, he has handed out money on many occasions to a central fund at Budapest which alleviated the sufferings of refugees. Here one may note, for the benefit of any optimistic begging-letter writers, that none of these shrewd millionaires is going to be duped by professional beggars. Each has his daily quotas of appeals for assistance—in the case of Lady Houston they have amounted to as many as six hundred a day. But they meet with short shrift. Either they go into the waste-paper basket or they go to the Central Charities' Organization.

Now let us turn to the details of Lord Rothermere's generosity. Evidently they cannot be complete as, like the other millionaires dealt with in this article, much of their philanthropy is done anonymously. But one of his earliest benefactions, very properly, was in the memory of his father, who had been a bencher in the Middle Temple. Instead, however, of putting up a statue, which would have done nobody any actual good, he started a memorial fund for the foundation of law scholarships to the tune of £40,000. In memory of the late Lord Northcliffe, he and his brother, Mr. Cecil Harmsworth, gave £30,000 to found a chair of Modern English Literature at London University in connexion with the Tercentenary Fund of University College. Oxford and Cambridge were equally fortunate when he founded chairs of Naval History and American History in memory of his two sons, at a cost of £20,000 each. In memory of Geraldine Mary Harmsworth he bought for £155,000 the site of the

Royal Bethlem Hospital, and thus preserved its green spaces for ever as a park for the children in congested Southwark. It will be seen that nearly all Lord Rothermere's gifts to the nation have been of a personal character. He gave £10,000 to the St. Marylebone Grammar School, where he and two of his brothers were educated. Again, he gave Sir Joshua Reynolds's picture of the Countess of Erroll to the Art Gallery at Glasgow to commemorate the severance of his business relations up there, and time and again he has given thousands of pounds to the Newspaper Press Fund for distressed journalists. He also gave £10,000 to the journalists and others who were put out of employment by the newspaper amalgamations in Derby, Newcastle, and Bristol. One of his most interesting gifts, which I suspect concealed a touch of whimsicality, was the £5,000 he gave to a clergy school at Leatherhead. With the donation he sent a letter, in which he said, "As a large employer of labour, it is my observation that the vicarage and the manse supply Britain with many of its finest boys." My reference to whimsicality is due to the fact that Lord Beaverbrook, his greatest rival in newspapers, lives at Leatherhead and is himself a son of the manse. Among his other gifts one may note £3,000 to the Southern Irish Loyalists, prompted no doubt by his Irish blood, as well as by his genuine sympathy with their very hard lot; and the £5,000 given to found the Master Mariners' Company. Perhaps he had in mind the *Atlantic Daily Mail*. It may be thought that I am probing too deeply into individual cases of his generosity, and perhaps I am wrong. Certainly there seems nothing but a genuine desire to benefit humanity as widely as possible in this list of benefactions, all made in the course of a few days in 1928:

£1,000 to the National Association for the Prevention of Tuberculosis.

£1,000 to the Lifeboat Fund.

£5,000 to the Salvation Army Shelter at Spitalfields.

£4,000 to Hungarian refugees.

£5,000 to King George's Pension Fund for Actors and Actresses.

This was followed by £25,000 for the Miners' Distress Fund, an object of charity which also aroused Lady Houston's generous instincts; by £5,000 to pay off the public debt of the town of Dornoch; by £10,000 towards the purchase of the Wilton Diptych; by 2,000 guineas to a children's hospital near Hastings; and £170,000 in connexion with the site of the Foundling Hospital.

Many people who do not know Lord Rothermere imagine him to be rather a glum, gloomy man. Those who know him well tell you that he is more like a jolly sea-captain than a professional pessimist. Certainly, if philanthropy has any repercussions on the philanthropist, Lord Rothermere ought to be a happy man. His public generosity must have cost him nearly a million pounds, and it has practically all been of inestimable help to the people it was meant to benefit.

Most people think of Lord Wakefield in terms of aviation and speed records by land and sea. He has been labelled "Speed's godfather," as indeed he deserves, and it is true that so long ago as 1910 he definitely associated himself with aviation. But his record as a philanthropist goes back much further. It is the result of his own generosity to pioneers like Amy Johnson, J. A. Mollison, Sir Henry Segrave, and others that the public has forgotten his other contributions to the public good. In 1915, as Lord Mayor of London, he wore himself out in work on behalf of the British and French Red Cross funds, the Belgian and Serbian Relief funds, the Y.M.C.A., and so on. As Lord Mayor he was associated with

the raising of £250,000 for the Kitchener Memorial. He even turned the Mansion House into a recruiting station and administered the Oath to thousands of volunteers. Shortly after the War he made a tour of the United States as the leader of a British delegation of Friendship. He presented statues of Burke and Pitt, and busts of the late Lord Bryce, to various cities. Of British aviation he has been a staunch supporter for twenty years. He co-operated with Sir Alan Cobham's flights to Australia and round Africa. He has given light aeroplanes to flying clubs all over England, Canada, New Zealand, South Africa, and Australia. He has endowed a series of scholarships for Air Force cadets at Cranleigh. When Sir Alan Cobham made his aerial tour of England, he enabled 10,000 children to have free flights. When Amy Johnson wanted to fly to Australia he helped her. When Kaye Don wanted to go on where Sir Henry Segrave left off, he lent his assistance.

Where in all this welter of generosity can one find a guiding line? The answer is to be found in what Robert Louis Stevenson told him years ago. "Fill your life," said R.L.S., "with sunlight and laughter, and radiate happiness. That is the best kind of success." Lord Wakefield goes further. "Roughing it," he says, "can only be a blessing to the exceptional man and in exceptional circumstances. In the main one must consider ordinary human beings with average abilities who can so easily be crushed. It is the privilege of citizenship to mitigate hardships of environment, so that all may have a chance and not remain without hope or help from those more fortunate."

It may be observed that before the days when he became so intimately associated with the encouragement of bids for the various speed records many of his benefactions were in connexion with anniversaries of various kinds. The tercentenaries of Shakespeare and Milton and Sir Walter Raleigh all

found him in the forefront of the philanthropists. He marked the eightieth birthday of Lord Balfour by paying for the re-decoration of the rooms occupied by the British Academy at Burlington House. The retirement of Walter Page from his post as Ambassador at the Court of St. James was marked by his gift to him of a first folio of Shakespeare. His generosity was by no means confined, though, to these less imaginative gifts. The Industrial Welfare Movement, and particularly the relationship between education and success in after life, has claimed a great deal of his time and money. His interest in Empire unity caused him to send contingents of youthful marksmen to Canada, and enabled their counterparts from the Colonies and Dominions to visit us over here. Before we turn to his assistance to aviation, our attention is claimed by his gift of £25,000 to the Bethlem Hospital; by his £10,000 to the Motor Trade fund; by his £25,000 to the Imperial Institute; by the Pavilion at Ilford; by the £8,000 Children's Home at Alverstoke; by the Skittle Alley in the City; the City Police Mess at Bunhill Row; the Fresco in the Royal Exchange; and the countless cups he has given for the furtherance of boxing and other healthy sports in the Fighting Services.

The task of Sir Louis Baron, the last male of his family, was made comparatively easy for him by his late father, Mr. Bernhard Baron, who in his lifetime gave away nearly £2,000,000. The latter had, before his death, drawn up a list of 300 institutes and hospitals which he considered worthy of support. He also left two fortunes for their support. One, called the Charitable Trust, was of £500,000, to be distributed over twenty years on an actuarial basis. The other, which was 25 per cent. of the residue of his estate after the main legacy had been left, amounted to £460,000. This was in 4 per cent. Consols, which have risen so fast recently that, despite the £130,000 which has been distributed in the

past three years, the capital sum is £90,000 higher than it ever was—a charming example of casting your bread on the waters. In the list of 300 approved hospitals and institutes one observes that the average of Jewish to other denominational charities is one to four. Apart from the steady flow of anything from £100 to £1,000 a year to these various places, there are major donations of £25,000 to Middlesex Hospital, £20,000 to Queen Charlotte's, £20,000 to Papworth, £10,000 to a hospital in Poplar. "We never give to individuals, either as trustees of my father's fund or as ourselves," Sir Louis Baron told me shortly before his death. "We simply pass them on to the Central Charities' Organization. Our principle is to alleviate suffering, particularly where children are concerned." Pressed on the subject, Sir Louis said that he did not consider that bonuses to the staff employed by Carreras were to be regarded as either charity or philanthropy. Rather, they were tangible instances of gratitude for good work done in the past and the knowledge that loyalty would continue.

Playing-fields and parks, as I have already said, are the favourite gifts of the Cadbury family. The late George Cadbury began it with a gift of 330 acres near Birmingham in 1900, which is now worth £440,000. Since then thirteen acres of beechwoods in Buckinghamshire have been given to the nation. At Perry Hall Park, on the northern boundary of Birmingham, 158 acres were given to the public. Another eleven acres were given to form a municipal golf course near this fortunate city, together with a sum of money to erect a suitable sports pavilion. Worcester has benefited also by this love of the open air, as the shelter in Gheluvelt Park testifies. Near Evesham acres of land have been given to the Landworkers' College. In North Worcestershire 414 acres have also been presented to the public. Open-air boarding-schools—at Blackwell and Kingsheath—are other examples.

of the family generosity. Their philanthropy does not end here, however. They have given guest-house flats for missionaries on leave in Birmingham; public libraries; scholarship funds for Quaker girls; hostels; homes for cripples, and children's remand homes. It will be seen that nearly all their charitable bequests have been local in flavour. It is the same, largely, with Lord Nuffield, who has given more than half a million to charity in the past few years.

Lord Nuffield, an Oxfordshire man, has given no less a sum than £200,000 to the Radcliffe Infirmary alone. If you investigate his generosity you will learn that the guiding spirit is a desire to eliminate crippledom. It is particularly evident in his donation of £70,000 towards the rebuilding of the Wingfield Orthopædic Hospital at Headington. More than once he has spoken of his earnest desire to turn cripples into good citizens, and generally to develop the physique of the ailing and weakly. To St. Thomas's Hospital he gave £104,000; to Coventry Hospital he has given £15,000; to hospitals in Birmingham £25,000. In order to give the £200,000 to the Radcliffe Infirmary he diverted all his personal dividends from his own pocket. The exception to his general rule of philanthropy was the £10,000 he gave for the founding of a chair of Spanish at Oxford University—an act of generosity no doubt prompted by his own personal interest in the markets of South America. It must not be supposed, though, that his generosity ends here. One of his most admirable acts of benevolence was to give a paid-up life-insurance policy to each of his employees. That gives practical illustration of his dictum that if people considered the interests of working men more, there would be less of a lack of prosperity. Another unusual gift, with an amusing anecdote attached thereto, was the £10,000 he gave to enable parents of children at various Borstal institutions to visit them regularly. One parent, whose transportation had been made

possible in this way, is said to have thanked the Governor profusely after his tour of the Institution, adding, "Yes, I shall make certain that my second son comes here, too."

I have reserved Lady Houston's benefactions to the last, because they are perhaps the most interesting of all. Nobody else certainly has given a cheque for £1,500,000 to the Nation as an "act of grace," which is what she did after the death of her husband, who was domiciled in Jersey, and whose estate was therefore exempt from death duties. Before this, believing that charity begins at home, she gave no less than £50,000 to each of five impoverished and distant relatives of Sir Robert Houston. Sometimes her benefactions have been directed to objects chosen by other philanthropists, such as the Miners' Distress Fund and St. Thomas's Hospital. Mostly, however, her generosity and offers of money have been on a national scale. Take, for example, her sadly misunderstood offer of £200,000 to help the efficiency of the Army, Navy, and Air Force, which, in her opinion, was imperilled by the restriction in the latest estimates. Previously, she had offered to pay her income-tax, though there was no need for her to do so.

Like other philanthropists, Lady Houston wisely disregards begging letters. It seems that her practice is to read the newspapers, and when she finds that someone or something is so badly in need of help as to find his or its way into print as a news story, she sends assistance. That accounts for her £3,000 to save the Royal Botanical Gardens in Regent's Park; her £10,000 towards the building fund of Liverpool Cathedral; her £100,000 to St. Thomas's Hospital; her £11,000 to the Christian Protest Movement against the persecution of religion in Russia; her £100 to the widow of Captain Hinchcliffe; and her £10,000 to the National Council for Maternity and Child Welfare, among many others. Lady Houston is a business woman, and realizes that newspapers would never

print stories of misfortune that had not been carefully sifted beforehand. When she read that the late Sir Ronald Ross was compelled to sell his Malaria Research archives, she promptly bought them for £2,000 and then offered them to a museum. Her sense of humour is remarkable, too. When she felt compelled to sue a newspaper for its remarks about her gift to the Christian Protest Movement and won her case, she made the defendants pay the agreed damages to the very charity involved.

In conclusion, you will find throughout her countless acts of generosity that Mr. Winston Churchill was exactly right when he ascribed them to "a public-spirited desire to help the country"; and it is the irony of fate that her patriotism has been so great that it has more than once been misunderstood for that very quality of greatness.

Some time has now passed since Lady Houston made the third of her patriotic gestures of generosity to the Government. Her gifts of £1,500,000 to Mr. Winston Churchill; of £100,000 to be applied to the Schneider Trophy—a sum which was instrumental in winning that trophy for Great Britain—were followed by an offer of £200,000 to be applied to our fighting forces; and finally, by her financing the wonderful Mount Everest expedition, which has raised British prestige all over the world.

## CHAPTER XLI

### MODERN BUILDERS AND THEIR MATERIAL

WHEN I was five years old I was asked by a wealthy godfather what I would like to be when I grew up. I replied, "A sailor." "Why?" he asked me. Not being a bishop's grandson for nothing, and remembering the hymn, I replied, "Because I want to toss on the deep blue sea." Six months later I crossed the Channel from Queenborough to Flushing and made up my mind never to go to Osborne. To-day, I wish that I had been a successful architect between 1919 and 1926. Even dance-orchestra leaders and the smartest K.C.s earned less than a successful architect then. Ask Sir Edwin Lutyens and Sir Herbert Baker what they received for their services in designing the new Delhi. The answer would be between £90,000 and £100,000. And there are still a few titbits left. Sir Herbert Baker is the architect of the new Bank of England and, if he is paid at the standard rate of architects, which is 6 per cent. of the cost, he is getting £60,000 a year for eight years out of that one affair alone. The chances are, however, that as it is an £8,000,000 job, he agreed to a flat salary.

Then look at Sir Gilbert Scott, who designed Liverpool Cathedral. He must be getting a nice little income for each of the twenty years that it is taking to erect.

The leading architects in this country are :

Sir Edwin Lutyens,  
Sir Herbert Baker,  
Maurice Webb,  
Sir Gilbert Scott,  
J. J. Joass,

and the firms of Ashley & Newman ; Campbell Jones & Smithers ; Sir John Burnett, Tait, & Lorne ; Yates, Cook, & Darbishire ; Wimperis, Simpson, & Guthrie. There is also my elderly kinsman, Sir Reginald Blomfield.

"Well," I asked one of them, and it was not Sir Reginald, "how is the building industry to-day?" The answer was succinct. "Already we have too many new blocks of flats, new theatres and new cinemas and new shops. Mind you," he went on, "London is by no means over-built naturally. She is under-built compared with her ultimate needs or with any American city. But at the present minute enough has been built until the return to normal trading. I say this with personal feeling because my firm deals largely with commercial architecture. What is more, we own a number of buildings in the West End about which we are feeling rather uncomfortable. These new tariffs are proving so effective that importers of foreign goods are closing up every day.

By this time he was in such an impenetrable gloom that he called in one of his partners and retired to his blue prints. The new-comer was not quite so depressed, although he was in his shirt-sleeves. "The architect's dream," he said, "is to have a nice large factory to do. Theatres and private houses need too much detail. But wherever you go, you must be very careful about the danger of water. In London one knows all about the Tyburn and the Fleet and the Conduit, and there are three or four other streams which are pretty well charted. The strata vary all over London. After going through the loam you come to the sand and gravel, while below that is the blue London clay, which in places is 400 ft. thick. That is the stuff on which to lay your foundations. The Underground Railway system is all bored through it.

"If only that Charing Cross Bridge was built," he went on, "it would automatically mean the spending of millions of

pounds on buildings in the neighbourhood. In the last few years between two and three million pounds have been spent on underground and main-line stations. What we want now is an improvement in the streets of London. New building always follows street improvement, obviously. Look at Great Marlborough Street and the way it ends in a bottle-neck. If it could be extended farther it would mean thousands of pounds in building contracts. Curzon Street is going to be continued through the grounds of Lansdowne House until it reaches Berkeley Street. That is going to be wonderful for builders as well as for the traffic. From the point of view of hygiene and efficiency there is still room for tremendous improvements. They are nibbling at Soho. It needs entirely rebuilding. Then there is the Adelphi, which belongs to George Drummond the banker. The trouble there is the question of the foundations. Not only are they reclaimed land, they are riddled with tunnels." He, too, sighed and fell silent, until I spoke of the rebuilding of Park Lane, and asked his opinion on the controversy of reinforced concrete versus steel construction. Like everyone else whom I questioned on this subject, he seemed to prefer the latter.

"It takes much less time," he said, "and I for one am not yet satisfied that reinforced concrete is able to stand up to the vibration in a big city."

From the architect I went to a big building contractor. The building contractor, whose firm has built anything from the newest buildings in Regent Street to the oldest theatres in the West End, laughed. "Oh, yes," he said, "I'll tell you all about the building business in London or anywhere else. Our firm has done housing schemes all over the country. We have built aerodromes, theatres, cinemas, camps, and all the rest of it. But there is too much throat cutting in the building trade to-day. A big firm like this will spend £10,000 a year in working out the details for tenders, and

then find out that we and other reputable firms have been under-cut ludicrously.

"An unscrupulous building contractor can cheat you in so many ways. Take concrete. The stipulation may be that it should be one part of cement to every six parts of ballast. The jerry-builder may make the proportion only one in twelve. As ballast costs only 8s. a ton while cement is 54s. a ton, the difference it makes is noticeable. With inferior timber the specification may be that it should cost £20 per 165 cubic feet. The jerry-builder may supply inferior timber that costs only £12 per this quantity. It is the same with plastering. There may be a specification, too, of the number of pounds of cow-hair per superficial yard of wall plaster, and the jerry-builder may put in none. Inferior paints, foreign tiles, are other points over which an unscrupulous contractor can cut his costs.

"Between 1919 and 1926 our building contracts averaged about £400,000 a year. I have already told you how much we do now. We simply cannot get jobs in open competition. Don't think I'm spinning a hard-luck story. Our hands are full with public contracts. We have no cause to complain. But I am just explaining why we have switched from the building trade. The cost of preparing tenders in a big firm like this is about £10,000 a year. If you secure only about 2 per cent. of them—well, there must be something wrong."

He then proceeded to explain about this all-important point. Estimates from at least thirty or forty sub-contractors must be secured, each of whom must receive typewritten details about the various items. When the tenders are invited from the dozen leading firms it is curious how similar the estimates are. He showed me the tenders for a new public building. The highest was £45,000 and the lowest was £43,000. His own firm's was £44,000. Yet the difference in the estimated length of time varied from thirty-two weeks to a whole year,

In another instance the range was from £26,000 to £35,000 and he evidently felt very angry at the cut-throat price of the winning tender. His own firm had sent in an estimate of £29,000 on this occasion. That was the kind of thing, he intimated, that his firm were up against. For ninety-nine times out of a hundred the lowest tender is accepted. "If by any chance you find you *have* got the winning tender," he went on, "the first thing you do is to find out if you have left anything out. On one occasion a certain factory with eight north-light roofs was being tendered for, and then the firm with the lowest tender discovered that it had forgotten to multiply by eight the cost of one of these roofs. That cost a bit of money. Sometimes, if you are not careful, you will find that the estimating department will price a contract in yards when it ought to be in feet. That is costly, too.

"To show you just how accurate one must be in pricing things, here are a couple of items in one of our recent tenders :

"Water-bound macadam—

"Labour (spreading only) 2.12d. per superficial yard.

"Rolling . . . . 1.61d. per superficial yard. .

"You see that we have to go to two decimal points in pennies. Perhaps that is the best possible illustration of what the present state of tendering involves."

Not long ago Mr. Alfred Bossom, M.P., read a paper on economics and building at a meeting of the Architectural Association. In the course of it he revealed that we spend annually about £250,000,000 on new buildings and the maintenance of old ones throughout the country. But of this nearly half was directed and controlled by the Government or municipalities. And yet the building industry has the largest unemployed roll of any skilled trade in the country. The reason he gave for this was that many architects were lazy.

Other illuminating facts were that while a British bricklayer, plumber, or carpenter earned 12s. 8d. a day, an American plumber or carpenter earned £2 15s. and an American bricklayer £3 4s. a day; that on the other side of the Atlantic buildings were erected in two-thirds of the time that they took over here; that where we spend 40 per cent. of the total cost on labour, they spent 60 per cent.; and that they had revised their laws and regulations to make it possible.

One of the most interesting new buildings in London is undoubtedly the *Daily Express* building in Fleet Street, which looks like a transparent battleship. Buildings like this are being made in increasing numbers, with external walls consisting almost entirely of glass in a light steel framework. A new building at Nottingham is on the same principle. The health value of this type of construction, say the experts, is unquestionable, but other factors, like heating costs, must necessarily be taken into consideration.

The Dorchester is interesting because, though it was built on the reinforced concrete method, it was erected in record time. Of the buildings recently completed in London, one of the most intriguing is the £1,000,000 Masonic Memorial building next door to the Connaught Rooms in Great Queen Street. In all, it took three years to build.

As one cannot write on the subject of the building industry without some investigation into the men who do the building, I went and talked with a general foreman. "I would like you to say, sir," he began, "that the type of man in the building trade is immensely superior to what he was in the past. He takes more trouble with his appearance when he leaves at the end of the day. And when he is on the job he takes a genuine interest in his work. It is very rare that you have to discharge a man for laziness nowadays, even though none of them is on piecework. Then they drink less. Not so long ago the men used to have enormous meat

meals and then a pint or so of beer in the afternoon. To-day they eat more sparingly at mid-day and have tea and pastries later on. They cannot get beer at the canteen and they seldom bring it with them. Their hours are from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. with an hour's break for lunch."

He then told me of the various types of men employed on a building. The average member of the public could perhaps count up to seven or eight different types. In actual fact there are thirty or forty different grades, and to an expert the trade of each of them is immediately recognizable by their appearance. "The steel-erector men have a bearing that you can't mistake," he said. "There is something about them, you know." And no wonder, when they will climb 70 ft. up a steel girder as though the rivets were the rungs of a ladder, only holding on with their arms; or walking across steel joists 3 ft. apart at a height of 70 ft., just as if there were a solid floor there. They deserve a lot of admiration, those men, and they only get paid a penny an hour more than the navvies. The lightning-conductor men are just as specialized as the steel-erectors. They, too, go round the country following their jobs. "Being something like steeplejacks they resemble monkeys more than men, they do indeed," said the expert.

Here are some of the grades of the 500 workmen employed on the average big building :

Mattock men	Joiners
Concreters	Glaziers (four kinds)
Steel-erectors	Heating and ventilating engineers
Asphalters	Electrical equipment men
Bricklayers	Gas fitters
Carpenters	Lift engineers
Slaters	Lightning-conductor men
Stonemasons	

Plumbers	Floor layers (four kinds)
Terra-cotta fixers	Stone carvers
Plasterers	Painters
Marble masons	Decorators
Wall tilers	Gilders
Iron workers	Floor covering men (rubber,
Mosaic layers	lino, and so on).
Steel-window men	

I asked the expert whether men of each grade kept to their mates exclusively. He said, "No." He said that the important point was that the general foreman representing the building contractor, should be on good terms with the Clerk of the Works, who acts for the architect and sees that the work is done according to schedule. "Fortunately we are," he added. Incidentally, they are both teetotallers—a sign of the times.

My final call was on another big building contractor. He told me that there are about nine leading contractors in London—each with about twelve jobs of varying sizes on hand. He explained that if a building contractor made a profit of 10 per cent. on a job, he would count himself extraordinarily lucky. If he made 5 per cent. he would feel highly satisfied.

The chief building contractors are :

Trollope & Colls	Minter
Higgs & Hill	Mowlem
Carmichael	Walter Lawrence & Son
Holland, Hannen & Cubitt	Bovis
Holloway Bros.	

Sometimes the building owner will say to a contractor that the building he wishes erected will cost  $x$  pounds, and how

much profit does the contractor want? Payment by the building owner to the contractor is made monthly on the certificates of the architect, but with 10 per cent. withheld until six months after completion, in case any defects have to be made good.

In conclusion, as architects are so inclined to alter their plans as the work proceeds, it is very seldom that time penalties, which may run up to as high as £50 a day, are ever inflicted on a building contractor.

## CHAPTER XLII

### BRIDGE AS A BUSINESS

ELY CULBERTSON, the storm-thrush of the bridge world, is regarded by most people merely as an erratic genius with an uncontrollable flair for creating scenes. This is a very one-sided aspect of a man who has—out of a mere card game—built up an enormously successful business organization during a period when bank presidents have been arrested, colossal trusts have failed, and kings have been exiled.

"I make a million dollars gross profit every year," he once told his publicity man exultingly in a taxi-cab, and that has nothing to do, mind you, with his actual bridge winnings.

Ely Culbertson works sixteen hours a day with unabated enthusiasm. He edits and controls magazines in England and the United States. He writes books. He syndicates articles. He writes scenarios and he broadcasts—all about bridge. Above all, he has an organization of several thousand teachers of his system, all of whom pay to have lessons and then pay again for their certificates of efficiency. In America he has 3,500. In England, so far, 150. There are hundreds more in France, Italy, and elsewhere on the Continent.

When in Europe he rushes about from Paris to Rome and back again arranging teachers' conventions, exhibition matches, and all the rest of it. Bridge with him is a business, not a hobby. The first Culbertson Teachers' Convention was held in London two years ago, just after the Schwab Cup match between the American team led by himself and the English team. The Convention lasted three days. It is an intensive course of coaching (for a fee), and the ten that have been

held in the United States so far have been attended in the aggregate by literally thousands of people. A typical programme is that of the first day when Culbertson lectured on Plastic Valuation from 10.30 to 1 p.m. with only a fifteen minutes' break, and then, after half an hour's talk by an unnamed expert, he lectured on opening bids and the play of the dummy from 3.15 to 5.30, after which he and his wife spent an hour receiving the teachers and answering their questions.

There are two types of Teaching Certificates in use in the Culbertson organizations both in the United States and in England. One is a white certificate, the other is a blue certificate; both have to be paid for. There is also a written examination made by all teachers who obtain certificates. These examination papers are compiled by Mr. and Mrs. Culbertson. They are applied for by the teacher holding the white certificate to the British Bridge headquarters, and at the time of application the name and address of the prospective teacher for whom the paper is to be used and the approximate date of his or her taking the examination are submitted.

A charge is made by the studios for the cost of the examination paper too. This charge is credited in favour of the teacher holding the blue certificate when he or she attends a Teachers' Convention with the object of obtaining a white certificate. It is not compulsory for the blue certificate holder to attend a convention and obtain a white certificate, but in most cases they do.

Here are the first three questions in a recent questionnaire:

" 1.—State in your own words—

(a) The approach principle.

(b) Give the forcing bids.

" 2.—Give the complete table of honour tricks including the plus values.

- “ 3.—(a) Explain the rule of 8 (the yard stick).  
(b) How should the rule of 8 be applied in estimating the number of honour tricks held by the opponent ?  
(c) Give the 4-5-5½ count.  
(d) Over partner's opening suit bid of one, how many honour tricks are required to call : one no trump ? two no trump ? three no trump ?

But what sort of a man is this Ely Culbertson ? Well, he is tall, angular, anæmic, and restless. It is surprising that he is able to sit through a rubber of bridge. As a matter of fact he seldom does so. He has a steady blue-grey eye, a favourite expression, “ Gee, that's swell,” a spluttering mouth, and great aggressiveness when he is on the warpath ; but he can be actually very charming. He smokes like a furnace, is a teetotaller, and seems to live on nothing but smoked salmon for breakfast, lunch, and dinner. He also takes a good deal of bicarbonate of soda.

Few people have had a more extraordinary life than he, the founder of the theory and practice of modern contract bridge, who revolutionized bridge for the experts and dramatized it for the millions. He is forty-one. His father was an American mining engineer of Scottish descent in Russia. His mother was the daughter of a General from the Caucasian Mountains. From her he gets his somewhat Slavonic cast of countenance. At the age of sixteen he spoke seven languages and wrote his first novel. He took an active part in the first Russian revolution before the War, in the Mexican revolution, in the World War, and in more recent upheavals in Europe, and at the bridge table.

His family property having been confiscated by the Bolsheviks, he returned to America in 1921 hoping to become possibly a Professor of Economics. It is said that at this time he even did some dish washing. Then he met his wife, who

was well known as the greatest bridge player alive. They married, and spent their entire honeymoon in writing a book on bridge which at the end turned out to be far too complicated to be successful.

As a practical player he has won more national and international championships than any other player to-day, and yet the experts say that though the Culbertson system is the best, he himself is by no means a flawless practitioner of it. His army of teachers teach the Culbertson system to 1,000,000 players every year, and over 200 newspapers carry daily articles on bridge by him and his wife.

Culbertson claims that he has never forgotten any significant hand that he has played in his life. In actual fact he has a shorthand typist who writes a descriptive account of everything he does and everything he says in every exhibition match in which he plays. The reason why he does not make even more money out of bridge is due to the fact that in the past it has been impossible to charge gate-money, because an insufficient number of people can be given seats good enough to make it worth while. However, he brought with him from America a new electrical machine which cost £160 merely in Customs duties on the way into this country. I do not know much about it, but it is an automatic scoring machine which can tell a large audience exactly what is going on, and it ought to increase very largely the possibilities of large crowds paying admission fees to attend exhibition bridge matches.

Culbertson is very dogmatic. Like all big men he can see only his own point of view. He makes instantaneous decisions. He never changes his mind. His wife never argues nor says a word over the bridge table or anywhere else, although there is usually a row going on. They say it was she who taught him bridge. They have two children, aged five and four. If you ask him, Culbertson will tell you that he has already taught both of them bridge. He has a

ten-year plan for their education which will prevent them from ever being afraid of anything. He says that fear and a sense of balance are the two strongest points in one's make-up and that the one must be eradicated and the other developed. After the ten-years' plan he proposes to have another ten-years' plan for them. I am glad I am not either Fifi or Bruce.

Many stories are told of him. One of the best was that of the effort of the Marx brothers to play a match with the Culbertsons. Zeppo asked them to a strictly private friendly match, and the invitation was accepted. The first thing the Culbertsons knew on their arrival was that Zeppo, Harpo, Chico, and Groucho had invited more than 300 stars, directors, and executives to watch. They had thirty flashlight photographers and a hundred reporters present to announce to the world that a match even greater than the Culbertson *v.* Lenz match was in the making. This led to the horrified retreat of the Culbertsons from Hollywood. It was subsequently discovered that one of the Marx brothers, of whom there are really five, had rigged up a watch-tower from which, with a telescope, he was to observe the match and manipulate the "stop" and "go" signals to the players.

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## CHAPTER XLIII

### THE WORLD'S LARGEST SLATE MINE

THE road wound higher and higher through the thin mountainy drizzle. At last the white gates of which we had been told came into view and there in front of us was a desolation more complete than the watersheds of Montenegro. Miles of shale spread themselves in petrified avalanches. Toy railway tracks twisted among them. We had come to our goal—the biggest slate mine in the world. It is situated a mile north of Blaenau Festiniog in Merionethshire, North Wales, and from its wild fastnesses slates have gone out to Australia, New Zealand, West Africa, India, and all parts of the world. When the Hôtel de Ville in Brussels had to have its fifteenth-century roof replaced, the blue-grey slates of Merionethshire were used. You will see their symmetry on Cologne Cathedral, on the Peace Palace at The Hague, on churches in Denmark, on country houses in Germany. For this mine has been in continuance for 130 years. Before that it was a quarry for another 200 years. The present-day slate-getters and their partners are in many cases the fifth and sixth generation of miners. Their craft is older than the coal-mining in Derbyshire.

It is for this reason that the whole system of the mine is quite nineteenth century, except for the necessary machinery. In coal mines you have gangs of several men in charge of a leader. At Blaenau Festiniog, or at any rate in the Oakeley mine, the contracts, which are monthly ones, are given by the company to units of four men. Two of the men are the slate-getters underground. Of their two partners above ground, one is the splitter and the other is the dresser. They

split and dress only their own mates' blocks of slate. Sometimes they are behind time and sometimes they are ahead of schedule, so there is bound to be a certain wastage of time. Still, that is how they like to do it. On an average the two men below ground "win" about four tons of slate a day which shrinks to one ton of completed slates when all is split and dressed. The record number of slates ever completed by one of these quartettes in a single day is 4,800.

"There can be very few other large industries," said the general manager, "where the raw material is produced and turned into polished goods by twos. It comes down, of course, from the old days when isolated groups of men worked the open quarries and it is high time that it was altered. But up here in the mountains the mine is far removed from modern conditions and it is slow to adapt itself to them. Even the basis of payment dates back to the price-list of last century. It has never changed in principle. All that happens is that the men are paid 'poundage,' which means that they get anything from £2 to £6 extra each month per pound sterling prices on the old list. This small unit system means that outstanding men cannot earn as much here as they should because their responsibilities are so small. But why don't you go down and see the men at work?"

Borrowing a mackintosh, and afterwards wishing I had borrowed some heavy boots as well, I was placed on an iron handcart with a rough plank nailed on one side. A moment later my guide and I jolted down an incline of one in three to the mouth of the pit proper. This looked for all the world like Dante's *Inferno*. Clouds of smoke billowed out from the gunpowder blasting which reverberated from the womb of the mountain every few minutes. A miner's lamp was pressed into my hand and I was put on a wooden platform which sped swiftly down at an angle of 45 degrees through the gunpowder smoke to one of the five levels at which the slate is

won. A toy railway line led eastward through the Stygian gloom. The ground was putty-like in consistency. Every moment or two we had to step aside while small Welsh miners went by pushing trucks loaded with shale or blocks of slate. The air was cold but absolutely pure. I was told that I could light a cigarette if I wished. It was only near the gelignite and the gunpowder where this was forbidden. Every few yards we passed the men's "dining-rooms." These are long narrow burrows in the side walls of the tunnel along which we were walking with bowed heads to avoid the low rocky ceiling. The burrows are about 40 ft. long, with rough trestles, and are about 7 ft. high and 10 ft. wide. The men eat sandwiches and drink tea there between 11.30 and 12, which is the half-hour break in their eight-hour day.

Armed with our lamps we made our way along at a good pace until we came to the point where we were to go down another 300 ft. at the same angle of 45 degrees as before. It was most weird and unearthly. Moreover, the slant of the descent was for some reason much more agitating than the direct vertical drop you experience in a coal mine. Another long walk along the toy railway lines followed until we came into a chamber and saw two men actually at work. They had just touched off some gunpowder and had one side of their block clear. They were about to do it again to rend it off on the other side. The gunpowder smoke swirled about our nostrils. We were about 800 ft. below the surface of the ground. As we talked, a rumbling roar above us told of some other separated couple like these who were blasting out their daily bread. "What kind of slates will this block make?" I asked William Rowlands, the elder miner. "Oh, these will be duchesses," he said. And then I learnt a rather charming thing. Apparently the slates all go, or used to go, by the gradations of the peerage. Starting with "queens,"

which are 26 in. by 16 in., you descend to "princesses," which are 24 in. by 14 in. Then come "duchesses" (24 in. by 12 in.), "wide duchesses" (22 in. by 12 in.), "narrow duchesses" (22 in. by 11 in.), "countesses" (20 in. by 10 in.), and "ladies" (16 in. by 8 in.). There are also "viscountesses" which the Welsh miners call "bach," which means "small." These names no longer occur on the trade price-list. But the miners still go on with them as did their fathers before them. To-day there are twenty-seven different kinds of slates, and each has four variations in thickness.

But we are still in the chamber, hundreds of feet underground, and William Rowlands is explaining how it is done. By the light of his two guttering candles a trench is excavated by blasting along the inclined face of exposed slate. Then a "slice" has to be blasted at the bottom. Block after block of workable slate can then be torn off by holes bored at right angles to the cleavage plane. Two or 3 lb. of gunpowder are put in (Rowlands can tell to an ounce how much is wanted) and as the explosive exerts itself the rock splits, almost geometrically. In fact, it is severed, not smashed. The men who work granite can do a smash-and-grab act. The slate-getters have to be distinctly delicate. It is no good smashing slate. You cannot do anything with the broken bits as you can with granite. As each block is removed the original trench, of course, becomes wider and wider until the whole slab of exposed rock has been rent out at the desired thickness (about 2 ft.). Then they start all over again. Usually they do about three of these blocks a day, which involves moving them all the way up to the "mills" where their partners turn them immediately into complete slates.

Anxious to see this done we went up to the surface again by the way we came, and it was strange how positively hot and muggy the open air seemed after our long sojourn

underground. In the mills the men were all working hard (I may say that this mine employs 650 men all told), and if anyone can show me anything more fascinating than a skilled Welsh slatemaker splitting slate I would like to see it. When the block arrives it is at once set upon. The splitter knows to a fraction of an inch where to put his "plug and feathers," as they call the iron instrument used to cause the first split. He gives two preliminary taps with his hammer and then a hard knock, and the huge block splits perfectly. Further splitting of this sort continues until the lesser blocks have become perhaps 2 in. thick and 30 in. long by 25 in. wide. At this stage a wide chisel is used. Two taps and the slate comes apart like cheese cut with a string, and just as smoothly. There are men who can split an inch of slate into sixteen sections, and by machinery it has been divided into layers only  $\frac{1}{32}$ nd of an inch wide. I was shown some of these very thin ones, and they bend like tempered steel. Considering that slate is rock I cannot expect you to believe it unless you see it. But the curve is as great as that of any long saw, and it will bend both ways to an astonishing degree before it finally is compelled to snap. At the moment, I am told, the Imperial Research Institute is having a high old time "cooking" this very thin slate. By subjecting it to an intense heat they make it swell like a sponge. The completed result is exactly like pumice, and it floats in the water. Having got this far the chemists are wondering what use they can make of their discovery.

One of the chief objections to slates for roofing is that they are ugly. That is a matter of opinion. Some people think that the blue-grey slate would be much more attractive than the gaudy pink and red tiles you see on modern villas. Despite the enormous outburst of building in this country, the slate trade has been diminishing fairly fast. Jerry-builders naturally do not want to put everlasting roofs on

houses that they do not expect to stand up to the British climate for more than twenty years. You might have thought that the L.C.C., with all its slum-clearance plans, would have increased its orders for Welsh slate. The contrary is the case. They have just reduced the proportion to tiles from 45 per cent. to 25 per cent. No doubt they think, that the calm, grey, almost classical line of the tiles would make the garish brickwork underneath look more garish still. And they would be right. Yet it is a pity that one of Great Britain's oldest industries should be allowed to go into a decline largely because its products are so lasting and unpretentious. But that is the way of the modern world, isn't it?

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CHAPTER XLIV

BEER, GLORIOUS BEER !

I ALWAYS wanted to know about beer long before I went over the Löwenbrau in Munich two years ago.

Now I do.

As a confirmed beer drinker who likes to precede even his hock at luncheon with a glass of light ale or lager in the German fashion, I have often puzzled over the difference between porter and stout, between mild ale, pale ale, bitter, lager, strong beer, and small beer.

The alcoholic content of hops had always eluded me. No wonder, because the strength of the beer, I now know, has nothing to do with the hops at all. And yeast. What was yeast? I never knew even the dictionary definition, much less what action it really has on beer.

Now, as Les Girls say, I know all the questions and all the answers. For three hours I have looked on the beer while it was golden, and on the stout while it was dark. Admirable smells have assailed my nostrils—rich porridgy perfumes, the tang of hops, and all the intervening odours. Men in bowler hats and white aprons have opened huge bronze cauldrons for me. Girls in green costumes with white gauntlets on their right hands have screwed down the tops on the foaming pint bottles of ale (much to my regret). Large men in thigh boots have rolled great barrels of beer down inclines. Eddies of vapour, the exact colour of a good blue fox fur, swirled up from the mash tuns. At one stage there was a bed of solid foam which heaved gently in the half light.

It was over the only brewery in the City of London that they took me—founded in 1742 by Samuel Whitbread. To-

day nearly 3,000,000 pints of his descendants' brew are drunk every week—except at Christmas, Easter, Whitsun, and August Bank Holiday, when the amount is doubled. Extra hands are on such occasions signed on. The bottles flicker more regularly than ever over the endless conveyors. The pale-green dried flowers which are hops are arriving in still greater quantities. More and more sacks of malt are being ground, mashed, boiled, cooled, fermented, and racked to quench the Christmas thirst of nations.

For there are seven different processes in making beer. The first I did not see. It is the conversion of the barley into malt, and is carried out in the barley-growing districts of Norfolk, Suffolk, Essex, Hertfordshire, and Lincolnshire. You buy it threshed by the farmer and then malt it in the malt-houses. It arrives at the brewery in sacks, after having been steeped in water, spread out on floors, and allowed to germinate before being slowly dried. Brewer's malt is not like the stuff you buy in bottles. It is just a lot of dried ears of barley. At this brewery there are ten varieties, the most notable being those which go to make pale ale, mild ale, Scotch ale, stout, porter, and bitter. All are incorporated to some extent with barley from sunny climates like Australia or California.

These dried ears of barley, known as malt, are then crushed between corrugated rollers—just enough to grind it to powder. At this point you become rather intrigued by the fans which withdraw the dust, and the serried ranks of magnets which catch and retain any foreign particle of metal. The malt now changes its name to grist as it slides down into the mash tun. This is a whopping great cauldron several yards in circumference. Water from the New River heated to a temperature of about 155 degrees is poured in and swirls about to the consternation of the grist, which undergoes a sudden change. The sugar in it dissolves and becomes a thick golden liquid

known as wort, while the mash stays for about two hours before the wort is allowed to drain off. The remainder is known, oddly enough, as "the goods" and ultimately becomes cattle feed.

Our friend the wort (ex grist, ex malt, *née* barley corn) is now boiled and thus makes its first acquaintance with the hops. It is the golden pollen in the heart of the hop which is all that really matters. Known as lupulin, it is needed for its flavour of bitterness and its preservative qualities. Without it, beer would taste dull, but it would be just as strong. So the next time someone complains to you that his beer is weak because he does not see a glimpse of a hop at the bottom of his barrel or tankard, you can tell him that he knows nothing of what he is talking about. Hops have no alcohol in them, nor do they create any. In a good brewery about two pounds of them are allotted to each barrel of thirty-six gallons. Wort and hops are all boiled together, the wort extracting the goodness from the hops.

The next stage of the wort is to flow into the hop-back, which looks like a large swimming-pool with copper sides and copper pipes in the middle. This is the end of the hop.

The wort is next strained through perforated plates, and has only one more stage before fermentation. This is the cooling process in refrigerators made partially of gun-metal and copper. There are eight fermenting rooms, one of them being 54 yds. long and 21 yds. wide. This is where the yeast joins the party. Do you know what yeast is and what it does? It is a self-productive living organism which feeds on the sugar of the wort, and by its breaking-down action turns the wort into alcohol, thus releasing carbonic acid gas.

During this process the yeast multiplies four times. Ultimately the yeast is scooped off the surface with a long-handled instrument, dried and pressed, and used again. Meantime the wort, which now at last can call itself beer, is run off into

casks, a process known as racking. These casks are made of the best oak, and are thumped, scrubbed, inspected by naked flares, and even smelt each time they are used again.

But how soon can you drink beer and how long does it stay drinkable? Well, it all depends on the beer. If it is mild ale, which quenches the bulk of the working men's thirst at 5d. a pint, it is quickly drunk. Brewed on Mondays, it is put in casks on Fridays, sent out on Saturdays, and swallowed on the Mondays, Tuesdays, and Wednesdays following—ten days or less from start to finish.

If it is pale ale, it is kept for a month or six weeks in aluminium tanks in the cellars, where it has a minor secondary fermentation. From there, if it is not to be draught beer, it is taken in 40-barrel tanks to the bottling department, where it is chilled to 32 degrees, kept a week, and then filtered and bottled. Pale ale in bottle will last six months. If it is on draught the brewers prefer it to be drunk within a fortnight.

While ale is beer, lager is not ale. A different kind of yeast is used for lager and, instead of being thrown off on the top during fermentation, the yeast drops to the bottom. Lager takes three weeks to ferment instead of the week allotted to ale. What surprised me more than anything else at the brewery was that lager is not only as alcoholic as pale ale, it is even more so. So people who drink it at luncheon because they think it weaker are quite mistaken. The explanation for the fallacy is that most people drink lager cold, and you can always drink more of any alcohol—from cocktails to champagne—if it is iced or thereabouts. For which reason public-houses which are thinking of serving their draught beer cooler than heretofore are very popular with brewers.

One of the things you quickly learn at a brewery is that there is no such thing as water. It is always called "liquor,"

with a fine of half a crown for any member of the staff who forgets. You also discover that those speckless black rubber-ringed tops on the pint bottles are made of—compressed coal dust !

That porter is a mild form of stout and is less popular than it used to be ; that export beers have more hops in them because of the need for preservation in foreign countries ; that the difference between stout and ale is caused by some of the ears of barley used for stout being roasted like coffee ; and that all-the-year-round brewing only began in the 'sixties, are other items you glean. Until then the warm weather and lack of anything approaching refrigeration caused brewing to cease during the summer months.

To-day there are about thirty leading breweries with a few hundred of small fry. In 1881 there were no fewer than 16,798. During the past thirty-two years the number of liquid barrels of beer produced in England and Wales has shrunk from 32,000,000 to 19,000,000, and if the extra tax had not been taken off it would have shrunk still further. At last, however, stringent rules have been drawn up to prevent near-beer being described as the real stuff. "Brewed from hops," "hop brew," "barley brew," "brewed from malt and hops" are examples of wording which are not permissible any more. That is something for which to be thankful.

Beer has never been better than it is to-day, which is why it has once again become a "class" drink. True, the popular taste is for an ale which is about 1 per cent. less in alcoholic content than before. But for purity, freshness, quality, and flavour, it is better than ever. The complete absence (at least in the big breweries) of all aerial contamination combines with the almost excessive filtration, the choice of the finest hops, the purest water, the highest grade yeast, and the best barley in providing a star-brilliant drink which would have enchanted beer drinkers even in the good old days when the

official beer tester sat in a puddle of beer—to see whether it was sticky enough to glue his leather breeches to the chair by the time he had finished his official pint. Goody, this has made me thirsty !

It was, as I say, in 1742 that the original Samuel Whitbread founded his brewery. Thirty years later George III and Queen Charlotte paid him a State visit, and a pleasant contemporary account of it is still extant. Here is an extract :

“ This event took place on Saturday. The time appointed for the visit in Chiswell Street was ten in the morning. Curiosity and courtesy outran the clock. Their Majesties were there a quarter before ten. With them were three Princesses. The Duke of Montagu, Lord Aylesbury, Lord Denbigh, Duchess of Ancaster, and Lady Harcourt. They were received at the door by Mr. Whitbread and Miss Whitbread ; and politely declining the breakfast that was provided, immediately went over the works.

“ It was the occupation of two hours. The steam engine, lately erected by the Birmingham Bolton, and first applied by Mr. Whitbread to the purposes of the Brewery, took up above half-an-hour. In which it was apparent, this was not the first half-hour thus usefully employed on economick arts.

“ His Majesty, with becoming science, explained to the Queen and the Princesses the leading movements in the machinery. In the great store there were three thousand and seven barrels of beer.

“ The stone cistern raised such wonder that the Queen and Princesses would go into it, though through a small hole, with much difficulty and some disorder. The sight rewarded them ; for the vessel is of such magnitude as to hold 4,000 barrels of beer. The great vessel at Heidelberg is nothing to it. The cooperage was looked at from an adjoining room, and it was at this window, looking into the street, that the people without, who by this time had gathered into a great

crowd, first seeing the King, gave breath to their loyalty, and repeatedly huzzaed. The Queen, whose worth, were it her sensibility alone, would be beyond our praise, paid the people with a tear !

“ When everything was seen, the walk ended in the house. Their Majesties were led to a cold collation, as magnificent as affluence and arrangement could make it. The whole service was plate. There was every wine in the world. And there was also that, without which the board had been incomplete, some Porter, poured from a bottle that was very large, but, as may be thought, with better singularities than the mere size to recommend it. As there was no want of anything else, there was no want of appetite. This being done, it became two o’clock ; when the King and Queen, not more than completely satisfied with the wonder of the works, than the good sense and elegance with which they had been shown, took leave of Mr. Whitbread and his daughter, and returned to Buckingham Palace.

“ Thus ended these events—which had been agitating for several months past. The events may seem little in themselves, but they are far from little in their application ; for they apply to what philosophically gratified the Prince of a trading people ; and as properly illustrated, one of our prime men in trade. They show the reverence due to the sure dignity of private worth—equally conspicuous for duties well done, and comforts well enjoyed.”

To-day the brewery pays the Government over £1,000,000 a year one way and another, and the 163-year-old tribute to the founder of the firm is as fresh and deserved as ever.

## WINTER—AN OPEN SEASON FOR BURGLARIES

WITH the approach of autumn many things come into season—among them mincepies, Christmas presents, and burglaries. The long nights, early dusks, frequent fogs and mists, all make that period of the year a busy one for thieves, and particularly cat-burglars. If you do not believe me, ask one of the great firms of assessors and valuers who represent Lloyd's. I have just spent the afternoon with two of them.

The phrase, A 1 at Lloyd's, is known all over the world. There was a German woman not long ago who insisted on discovering whether the *Mauretania* was A 1 at Lloyd's before she would risk her life in a transatlantic voyage. Lloyd's insurances are carried wherever risks are insurable. It was only the other day that Lloyd's paid out £300,000 to an American bank in respect of the defalcations of an employee who had defrauded them of that amount. Nearly every householder in the country insures against theft and loss, and Lloyd's stands the racket. Of course, every loss or theft needs investigation and confirmation, and this is where the assessors and valuers come in.

Perhaps you have been burgled yourself, and know the nice type of young man who calls on you and courteously asks for details with regard to your insurance claim. If you have so far been lucky and escaped the need to claim, let me give you a word of advice from the horse's mouth. When one of these men comes along, do not leave him hanging about the hall. He does not like it any more than you would.

As one of them said to me, "We are naturally more anxious

to pay out to people who are pleasant to us." By the same token it is unwise to attempt even the smallest bribery, though this happens quite often. Jewellery is usually the article on which claims are made most frequently ; but insurance covers anything from twins to earthquakes, and the oddest losses are reported and the queerest risks are insured against.

One man not long ago insured against the risk of his mother-in-law living for another month. The doctor said that she was sure to die within a week, but the son-in-law was determined to have some kind of financial compensation in case the doctor was wrong. However, the doctor was right.

Risks which cover the loss or theft of furniture are usually rather dull affairs. But who would ever suppose that Lloyd's would have to pay out for the theft of eight mahogany doors ? Yet this happened not long ago. An empty house was being "done up," and the workmen had just gone off for luncheon when a van drew up, out of which four burglars emerged. Quickly and efficiently they removed eight mahogany doors from their hinges and drove off with them. The doors being  $2\frac{1}{2}$  in. thick and 7 ft. high and 120 years old, the assessors had to pay £320 to the owner. On investigation it appeared that the thieves had arrived dressed up as workmen in caps and overalls, and the policeman who was watching them never supposed for one minute, when he saw the doors removed, that there was anything sinister in it.

At the present moment there is quite a fashion in the underworld for stealing Adam's mantelpieces. You would not imagine that anyone could get away with it. But they do. It is even more fashionable than the smash-and-grab raids on jewellers' shops, which have rather died down in the past few months. For, as in everything else, there are cycles in law-breaking. Not long ago Lloyd's were paying out to golf club after golf club on insurances against loss by

stealing. The thieves would come along in plus-fours and carrying golf clubs from some unattended motor-car. Having paid their green fee they would disappear into the changing-room and depart with the contents of the various members' golf jackets and other objects in the locker-rooms.

In cases like this it is rather difficult to assess satisfactorily the loss sustained by the insured persons. Your favourite bag of clubs, collected after years of careful selection, is worth much more to you than the nominal value of it. But most assessors are nice people, and though objects of sentimental value cannot always be valued at the high rate at which the victimized owners estimate them, they are usually very generous. Incidentally, one of the most important assessors in the country had his overcoat stolen recently. It was three months after he bought it. But he assessed it for himself at the original purchase price all right. I have made a note of that myself in case of accidents to my own.

Not all assessors and valuers are the same, however. There are some who, when confronted with a claim for £100, will say, "What about settling for £50?" This kind of behaviour infuriates the honest ones who do not think it clever to screw people down. The best firms never bargain. Mind you, a high percentage of people who are only partially insured never read their insurance policy and imagine erroneously that they are insured against every kind of risk. There have been occasions, on the other hand, where people have claimed too little and the assessors will advise them that they are entitled to more. But this does not often happen.

On the whole I gather that the public are extraordinarily honest. It is just as well, of course, that they are—because assessors are very clever people who go to a great deal of trouble to find out the exact circumstances of a loss and frequently can help the police. Their researches on the scene of the crime are conducted from a different angle and

sometimes yield unexpected clues. The police, although there is no official association between them, are still more frequently useful to the assessors.

But while there are many occasions when the assessors have to pay up and look pleasant even though, to use their own phrase, they are sure that it is "a screaming ramp," there has been only a handful of instances where a real fraud has been detected. The most dramatic of these concerned a £3,500 pearl necklace. The insured woman on this occasion wanted the cash instead of the usual procedure of a substitute of the same value. But she did not get it. Moreover, she died within a few weeks of the arrival of the new one. At the disposal of her effects one of her executors asked the lady's maid whether she would like any small possession of her mistress as a keepsake. The girl said that she would, and was given one of the cushions out of the motor-car, which, in turn, she gave to her own mother. Six months later, the mother, who usually used the cushion to lean against, fell down and sat on the cushion. Feeling something hard underfoot, she ripped open the cushion and found the necklace sewn up in a silk handkerchief belonging to the dead woman. The daughter, who was now a servant in another house, was informed and took it off to the family solicitors. They, in turn, informed the assessors, who for months had harboured a strong suspicion that there had been something "phoney" about it. Subsequent inquiries showed that the woman had been blackmailed for years and no doubt had wanted the cash value of the necklace to pay the blackmailer.

Blackmail is often found to be the cause of thefts. Sometimes it leads to tragic results. There was a man who claimed for the loss of a piece of his daughter's jewellery not long ago. The assessor, who told me the story, went and investigated the matter, and came to the unhesitating conclusion that the thief was the insured man's housekeeper, who had been in

his service for thirty-three years. When he voiced his suspicions, the man said that it was quite impossible, and that he thought so highly of his housekeeper that he preferred to drop his claim. He then went off on a holiday to Torquay. A week later he telephoned the assessor to say that his housekeeper had committed suicide. Subsequent revelations showed that she had been carrying on with a young house-painter, who had been blackmailing her for months, and who insisted that she should make a final clean-up in the absence of her master, and despite the suspicion already centring on her. It was at this stage that she took poison.

Two morals can be drawn from this tragedy. It is the experience of assessors that in an astonishing number of cases it is the Faithful Old Family Retainer, whom nobody suspects, who is usually the thief. This holds good in banks and shops and business firms, as well as in private houses. Frequently it is found that the F.O.F.R. has been doing it for years. The other point is in connexion with house-painters. It is very inadvisable to employ casual labour when anything is being done about the house. Always go to a big and respectable firm of house-painters—and window-cleaners too. They may cost more, but the records of the men are all carefully scrutinized, and there is no danger that they may be in league with a gang of thieves to whom they will give a plan of the house and an account of the daily routine of the owners and the regular household.

This case of the housekeeper who committed suicide is not the only one where the independent investigations of an assessor have led to a suicide. The assessor who told me this story told me also of a man who defrauded a bank, which was insured against this kind of thing, with forged documents. The assessor kept on the job for weeks and then, just when the net was ready to be drawn, the suspected man blew his brains out.

Besides their job of assessing and valuing losses, these experts have other things to do. When there was that air smash at Meopham, and Lady Ednam and Mrs. Loeffler and the others were killed, the assessors naturally sent out agents to scour the countryside for the valuables which had been lost and were scattered over a quarter-mile of Kentish cherry orchards. One of the bitterest experiences of another assessor I spoke to was his visit to a house which had been burnt down. It was known that it contained a good deal of jewellery. In a biting east wind and driving rain the assessor searched about the ruined house, sifting cinders, running his fingers through ashes and other wreckage. He was looking for a £1,000 brooch and a £500 necklace. All he found was a curtain-ring.

Salvage often enables assessors to recover a good deal of reported losses in the case of jewellery. But usually if anything comes back it is as the result of offering a reward. On an average, about 15 per cent. of lost valuables are recovered in this way. The biggest reward ever offered was one of £10,000 for a pearl necklace despatched from Paris to London. Moreover, the necklace was recovered. It was found in the lining of an overcoat in a slum of Toulouse. And the £10,000 was paid up. That is a point worth making.

Assessors find that the public is rather sceptical about the payment of money for information given which leads to the discovery of the lost property. On this occasion the £10,000 had to be split up among a dozen different people. One firm, in the course of a year, pays out about £20,000 in rewards. But it is no good going to them and saying that if they will advance you, say, £50, you will be able to recover it for them. Assessors have no green in their eye. Many people, however, come along most optimistically with this suggestion. They always say that it is necessary to bribe some informant of theirs in order to discover the whereabouts

of the missing property. Assessors, however, only pay on results.

Take the case of the clairvoyante in Madrid. A Spanish nobleman had lost some jewellery. The English assessor went out to investigate. Nothing was found. A reward of £5,000 was offered. Finally, a crystal-gazer offered her services. After throwing herself in a swoon, she said that the jewellery was to be found in a certain house in a certain street in a certain town in the United States, and then, having emerged from the swoon, confidently asked for her £5,000, spot cash. The assessors concerned cabled their agents in America, only to discover there was no such street. The money was not paid over.

Sometimes very strange people sidle into the offices of firms who are offering rewards. Thieves occasionally come in and say that if someone went to the cloak-room of St. Pancras, for example, and looked for a suitcase with the initials C. R. on it, they would find what they wanted. These are usually men who are double-crossing some gang which has not split up the profits of the burglary in an equitable manner. For there is little honour among thieves. These informants are usually satisfied with their revenge and seldom come back for the reward.

One reason why things that are lost in the street very often come back when a reward is offered is because the public is beginning to discover that within a very few hours all the pawnbrokers and jewellers in the country will be warned about the article in question, and if the finder tries to pledge it he will have the police on him before he has left the shop. While one of these assessors was discussing this with me, he produced a large diamond earring from his pocket. "That came back to me to-day," he said; "it was lost six months ago. Now a workman has handed it in to the police. He said he had found it in the gutter, placed it in a pair of trousers

that he had not worn again until yesterday, and then handed it in. It is a pity he did not do it before. We have already replaced it."

This business of finding things in the street led my friend, the assessor, to make an amusing generalization. "Believe it or not," he said, "but those people who are most positive about their movements at the time of the reported loss are nearly always quite inaccurate. Quite recently a woman said she had lost a pearl necklace, and produced two servants, one of whom swore that she had seen her mistress place it on the table when she went to bed; while the other said that she had seen it on her mistress's neck when she came into the house. This girl went on to say that she had particularly noticed that the emerald clasp had come undone. I did not believe it was a theft, because no one could have got into the house. So I advertised for it, and two days later it was returned to me, picked up in the street."

How many claims a day does a big assessor receive? Well, here is the list of pink folders that lay on the desk of one of them when I paid my call:

£70, burglary.

£260, theft of jewellery.

£800, burglary, clothes, valuables, etc.

£3,000, a diamond dealer's wallet (pickpocket).

£500, burglary of country house.

£500, theft from nursing home.

£88, burglary from cottage.

The smallest claim paid by this man's firm was for half a guinea, the claimant having lost one glove in a taxi-cab. The most frivolous was that of a man who said that he had partially singed the seat of his trousers against an electric stove. The most humorous was that of a man who claimed £500 "for the loss of his wife." He meant, of course, his wife's loss.

Sometimes the long arm of coincidence exerts itself in an incredible manner. There was a wealthy woman who had designed a valuable brooch, and lost it. She claimed for its full value, and then telephoned the assessor three days later. It appears that just before she telephoned, she had economically decided to get on an omnibus instead of taking a taxi at Marble Arch. She sat down and there, opposite her, was a woman wearing her brooch. There was no question about it, for it was unique. Quite spontaneously she leaned forward and said to the woman, "You are wearing my brooch." Without a word, the stranger unfastened it, handed it to her, got up, pulled the cord, and got out of the omnibus. It would, perhaps, be a still better story if the woman had then discovered that it was not her brooch after all. But these incidents I am telling here are actual experiences and not fiction.

Another coincidence occurred to a friend of mine, Count Bon de St. Hilaire. On December 27, 1929, he had a fire in his villa at Monte Carlo. Then (would you believe it?) on December 27, 1930, his pipes burst. He was insured with Lloyd's, who, of course, paid promptly for the damage in each instance. They were the first claims he had ever made, and he had been insured for thirty years.

Of course some firms and some people make claims quite regularly, and these are paid just as regularly. Their very size, in the case of the firms, and their profession, in the case of the individuals, make it natural that this should happen. Diamond merchants, whether on the Continent or in Hatton Garden, chaffer in the street and go around with thousands of pounds' worth of uncut gems in their pockets. I have seen them myself in the diamond market at Antwerp. It is not surprising if they have their pocket-books stolen occasionally.

Three kinds of robbery that always crop up are train-robberies, liner-robberies, and robberies committed by people

who come with an order to view private houses. In the case of train-robberies, the thing to do is to take your suitcase into the dining-car. In the case of the second, you should hand over all valuables to the purser. In the third instance, never let the most respectable visitor out of your sight. All this may sound obvious, but many people fail to do the obvious, and then get sore when they are victimized.

Sometimes, however, there is no accounting for the disappearance of valuables. A diamond ring, for example, will have been on a grand piano or a dressing-table at one minute, and though nobody could have entered the room it will be gone within an hour. In a case like that the assessors can only pay. Strange things do happen, and it is against things like this that people insure themselves. There have been occasions when a famous hostess has had ten or a dozen intimate friends to dinner in Mayfair, and by the end of the evening something has disappeared. Everything is done to discover what happened to it. But even the assessor, who can look farther through a brick wall than anybody else at times like these, is completely baffled and has to pay up.

Not long ago there was a Bright Young Party, and a loss was reported. The assessors weré given the names of all the guests. Somebody had stolen, and somebody got away with it, and that was that.

Assessors usually get to the bottom of most things, however. As a class, they have keen, appraising eyes, and reckon to tell within a minute if the claimant or suspected persons are lying. When I said that there was only a handful of frauds that have been detected, I meant it. But I did not say anything about those files on the desk of every assessor which are marked briefly, "No claim." Those are times when the assessor informs the claimant that he or she can sue, but meantime he does not propose to pay. That only happens when he has at least three out of the four aces up his sleeve

as a result of his investigations, and knows that the other one will have to be disclosed by the claimant if the case comes into court.

There are also cases where the less honest kind of assessor discovers in the course of his investigations that the pretty lady who has insured her jewellery has lost it in compromising circumstances—usually after a night out with another man. He will refuse to pay and the pretty lady is most unfairly cheated out of her rightful claim. Another victim of this kind of thing is the man who is running two establishments. He, too, will be told to grin and bear it, unless he wants unwelcome publicity, by the unscrupulous assessor. Fortunately the vast majority of the profession are absolutely honest, and when a married woman rings up to say that at all costs her husband must not hear about it, the assessor disregards the opportunity of what really amounts to blackmailing her out of her just claim and pays her in full without her husband's knowledge.

In conclusion, when pickpockets and burglars are in season, it is well to have all your jewellery overhauled, preferably once every two months, and, if you do not possess one, get a safe that is fastened to the floor of your house and so cannot be removed. Further, if you have an electric burglar alarm, see that the battery has not run down. That is the advice of the assessors, and they should know.

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## CHAPTER XLVI

### PUTTING THEM ON RECORD !

MOST of us possess a gramophone, and as soon as the lists of records come out we hurry to buy the crystallized voices of our favourite singers and comediennes, and music of pianists, violinists, and orchestras. And yet it never occurs to us to ask how their voices and music are potted so admirably for us. But in this age of science and laboratories undue curiosity would kill us like the cat. Life is too short for us to go round like the Elephant's Child in Rudyard Kipling's *Just So Stories*. And if we did, we would probably have our noses pulled just as effectively as he did. But it so happens that I have met the man who is responsible for putting on record nearly all our favourites, and he was charming enough to tell me all about it—and no nose-pulling, either !

“The most interesting part of my job, really, as recording manager,” he said, “is the time I spend out of hours. At least four nights a week I go the round of the concerts, the music-halls, the theatres, and the cabarets, listening for new artistes. When I am not doing that I am listening to the wireless in case I can pick up a new find. Evening after evening I spend with famous singers and entertainers, dining with them, supping with them, persuading them to sing some tune that I know will be a success, though they frequently doubt it themselves. And when I write my reminiscences one day they will be largely based on that aspect.

“But how do I put them on record ? Well, first of all I have to get them to the studio. This is not always easy. On one occasion Tallulah Bankhead held us all up. She had for-

gotten she had to make a record, and she was in her bath when we telephoned. So I had to send my sister round to throw some clothes on her and bring her back at once. In contrast, you have Cortot, who always arrives with the charwomen, and when the engineering staff arrive they find he has been practising for three hours—and with a little mountain of cigarette-ends beside him. Genius, they say, is an infinite capacity for taking pains. . . .”

But now let me tell the story in my own words. The artiste is led up to the microphone. The supervising engineer sounds a buzzer as a warning that the sapphire point of the electrical recorder is about to be placed on the wax disc. He then presses a switch which lights two red lamps in the studio. The “party” then begins, and while the two red lamps are alight, every sound in the studio is transferred to the wax. There are three studios. The smallest is about twenty feet by twenty, and is used for a singer with a light voice. For dance recording there is a studio twice the size; and for a symphony orchestra or a powerful opera singer there is a hall which would seat 700 people, so as to get the right amount of resonance.

About half a dozen records are made on an average before the ideal one is achieved. Jack Hulbert, though, is so painstaking that it takes him the whole of the three-hour session before he is satisfied with one double-sided record.

You might think that stars, who are always said to be so temperamental, would grow impatient if asked time and again to do their piece once more. The reverse is the case. Recording managers often find it very difficult to persuade these celebrities that they have done their stuff perfectly and need not do it again. This needs real tact, especially as the objection they voice is seldom the one they really mean.

But I am sure you would like to know how your favourite behaves in front of the microphone. Well, Chaliapine is

distinctly temperamental. Some days he feels that he can sing for hours and hours. On other days he feels that he cannot do it at all. When he feels that he can, he takes off his coat and virtually conducts the orchestra himself. He knows just the tempo he wants. He waves his arms mesmerically as he sings, and the real conductor has to give way altogether. Even more temperamental was Pachmann. He felt that he could never play without an audience, so he would send for a crowd from the office to fill the studio. Then he would suddenly send them out and as suddenly call for them again. Next he would ask if anyone who was there could play the piano, and if there was, as there always was, he would get him to play a bit of the piece he was about to play himself. The worse he did it, the better Pachmann was pleased, because then he would sit down and show us all how to do it. But he could never stop himself from chattering throughout the record, as you will have noticed on any records of his that you possess. His favourite remark was "Was that good?" Or else he would talk about Godowsky, his friend, whom he always said was the second best pianist in the world after himself. Pachmann always arrived in a heavy astrakhan fur coat, and with his flowing white hair looked the part of the great man.

Schnabel, on the other hand, is most business-like and is his own most violent critic. Having rehearsed dozens of times, he will go on and on, making dozens of "master-waxes," as they are called, until he feels absolutely satisfied. He knows exactly which is his best performance, although he cannot hear the tune being played through for him until it is made.

There is only one man—Jessé Crawford, the king of the Wurlitzer Organ Players—who insists on having earphones clamped to his ears so that he can actually hear the sounds he is making as they reach the recording wax in the inner room.

Schnabel is very broad-minded about popular music. One night the Hulbert Brothers were in the other studio with a little dance orchestra. "I don't understand how people enjoy jazz," said Schnabel, "but I very much admire the virtuosity of the brasses."

Only a few of the artistes like a glass of water. The others, with one exception, wait for their cup of tea in the interval of the three-hour session. The exception is Noel Coward, who has learnt the politicians' trick of sipping very slowly a glass of port to soothe his throat. This one glass will last him three hours. Noel Coward is always making wise-cracks and turning a phrase about incidents in the studio. The staff always look forward to his visits. When he made that record of *Cavalcade* the epilogue came from the play, and he decided that to balance it better on the disc he ought to have a prologue, so he promptly wrote one out on the back of an envelope then and there, and you can now hear it on the record.

Harry Lauder outdoes Chaliapine. He takes off his collar and tie, and his waistcoat as well, just as though he were going to do a spell of work in the gymnasium. On one occasion he came to the studio with a bad attack of rheumatism, so someone had to send out for a bottle of embrocation and rub his back between records. By contrast, Mark Hambourg gets so warmed up during his work that he brings an extra shirt, which he puts on after leaving the studio. No wonder Chaliapine once wrote on a photograph he gave to the studio manager, "A souvenir of our joy and suffering together."

For Gracie Fields, work in the studio is all a great joke. She is most original. She often comes along in old clothes—the older the better—and entertains the whole party. The band boys will give up any engagement within reason in order to be at one of her sessions. In the intervals she will turn

cartwheels and pour out tea, and in nearly all of her comedy records there is a whispered remark as a finale. The first time she did it was an accident on a record called "Would a Manx Cat Wag Its Tail?" If you have got it, look it up. Now she has made it her special autograph.

The Prince of Wales' records have all been made in public, so he has not been particularly conscious of the microphone. However, he has been heard to say that he would sooner listen to a record than make one. The Duke of York *has* made a record privately. It was at one of those camp sing-songs down in the country which he attends every year. It was found that there was not enough material for both sides of the record, so he was persuaded to make a special speech. At first he was a little nervous, but when he realized that the wax could be recorded again and again he did not mind.

Mr. Stanley Baldwin will not easily forget the time he made a record. It was at No. 10 Downing Street, and while the microphone was installed in the Cabinet room there, the electrical recorder was in the special van outside. The recording manager and his engineers were testing it in Mr. Baldwin's absence to make sure that the transmission was perfect. In order to do this the recording manager, who was in the Cabinet room, sat down and began to say rude things into the microphone to the engineers in the van. The latter played it back off the wax, and as Mr. Baldwin walked in he heard a loud voice saying, "The recorder is a savage animal who consumes large quantities of beer." But he laughed all right.

Conan Doyle made at least one record. He wanted to talk on Spiritualism, and the recording manager wanted him to talk on Sherlock Holmes. It needed a good deal of tact of which I have spoken to persuade Conan Doyle at least to combine the two topics.

To go back some years—when Beerbohm Tree recorded, he

used to become so excited that he stamped on the floor while uttering a certain dramatic phrase. Each time he rehearsed it he could not help stamping, and it was not until four records had been ruined that two mechanics were instructed to hold his feet down in order to finish the session.

Albert Chevalier was so absorbed in the making of the record of *My Old Dutch* that he overran the proper length by ten minutes. Lord Roberts made records in 1913 on National Service, but before he could speak a box had to be found which would enable him to stand on it and get his mouth level with the recording instrument.

One of Jack Hulbert's most successful records was made in extraordinary circumstances last summer. The recording engineer had gone to Monte Carlo to get some special records of Ambrose and his Band, who were down there. The first people he saw on arrival were Jack Hulbert and Cicely Courtneidge. He was delighted, for they had just completed *Jack's the Boy*, and had gone off without recording their songs ; so he telephoned for copies of the tunes to be sent by air mail, and fixed the orchestra in the lounge of a deserted hotel. Then he suddenly saw Jack Hulbert dash off to the swimming-pool in a bathing-dress. He chased him down there, fished him out, wrapped a towel over him, and, though you would never guess it from listening to the record, Jack Hulbert (as you hear him sing it) was walking up and down in a wet bathing-dress in the hall of the Hôtel Metropole.

Yehudi Menuhin, the boy genius, comes into the studio with his two sisters. While he is playing and rehearsing he has all the gravity of a man of sixty, but as soon as there is a break he frolics around with his younger sisters and is like a boy of ten. Incidentally, his father always has a bag of sweets, ready to give him one as a reward.

Most artistes are very conscientious. Henry Ainley had hurt his foot just before he was due to recite Kipling's *Re-*

*cessional* in one of those Aldershot Tattoo records, so the lift girl was extremely startled to see a tall figure in a dressing-gown and one foot in bandages remove a wide-brimmed hat and insist on being shown into the recording studio.

Cicely Courtneidge, in contrast to Gracie Fields, most of whose fun is spontaneous, arrives with every single detail down to the last inflexion of the voice thoroughly rehearsed. Danny Malone, the new "find," is a charming Irish boy so completely unsophisticated that he hardly knows how to bow, or to walk on or off the stage. Yet he made a fortune overnight with his first record. He had never had a lesson in his life, but he is having them now. When he was taken to Broadcasting House by an agent for a test, he was so starved that he fainted, but the recording manager heard him on the wireless that night and booked him next morning.

The most difficult recording of all is the recording outside the studio. It all has to be done by intelligent guesswork on the part of the recording manager, who in the case, for example, of the massed bands of the Crystal Palace, is inside the building. The van is outside, and success depends on the ability of the "spy" to guess to a second when the conductor is about to make his men strike up, so that he can warn the engineers in the van by telephone to start the needle on the wax. The best examples of this are the two records made by the King in the House of Lords. The "spy" was watching him from a corner of the Royal gallery, guessed exactly the moment he would start reading his speech after the manuscript had been put in his hand, telephoned through, and there were only three seconds between the time the needle started and the beginning of the speech. On the second occasion there were seven long seconds of silence before the speech began, because His Majesty unexpectedly adjusted his spectacles after the needle had already started.

## CHAPTER XLVII

### “MY ATTENTION IS DRAWN——”

WHEN the Mount Everest Expedition returned to England, Lord Clydesdale found about fifteen thousand press cuttings waiting for him at home. What is more, these press cuttings had been specially edited and sifted from a far bigger stack of newspaper references.

Not long ago I spent the afternoon in the laboratory of life which is a modern press-cutting agency. Situated in Fleet Street itself, its offices house nearly fifty men and women whose sole job is to cut newspapers and periodicals. Each of them has to memorize more than four thousand names and items of interest for people who subscribe from all over the world. These include cremation, Chinese architecture, earthquakes, skating at Grindelwald, the trick-riding feats of the Fifth Dragoon Guards, cancer research, and foreign mineral waters. Three thousand different periodicals in six different languages are clipped every week, and in some cases more than a dozen copies may be needed of any of the periodicals. The bulk of the demand comes from business firms who are anxious for all references to some new invention, undertaking, or industry.

Business men, air pilots, authors, actors and actresses, society people, scientists, research workers, sportsmen, and politicians is the order given me for the type of people who make most demand for press clippings. The demand among “society” people (for lack of a better word) has gone up 500 per cent. in the past few years !

In contrast there is the peer who, when asked if he would like to subscribe to the press-cutting agency a few weeks ago,

replied : " Any reference to myself in the Press is far more likely to cause me annoyance than satisfaction. I cannot therefore see the sense of paying an agency to draw my attention to septic outpourings about myself." In contrast, again, is another peer who, when asked after a year's failure to pay his subscription whether he wanted to continue the service, replied : " Please don't be amusing. You know I cannot do without my press cuttings." He was right. How else could he write to the newspapers so often, " My attention is drawn——" ?

Romance occurs frequently. In the files of this bureau there is a married woman in Mayfair who has paid since 1920 for all the cuttings of a distinguished artist, though he has not been in this country since 1926. In this way she learns, unknown to him, of all his successes and disappointments, his adverse and favourable criticisms, and, to a certain extent, of his private life.

You might suppose that best-sellers, who are often very jealous of one another, might care to employ the same method to keep track of their rivals. But you would be wrong. None of them does.

George Moore shortly before his death wrote a peremptory letter to this press-cutting bureau saying that he wished for no cuttings of references to himself that were less than three-quarters of a column in length. Bernard Shaw, who uses in America one of the eighteen foreign agencies employed by the bureau, had some five hundred cuttings about the trimming of his beard, which he altered a little time ago. He wrote furiously that it cost only a few pence to have his beard trimmed, and refused to pay hundreds of dollars on the publicity thereof. A famous Devonshire author, who was asked if he would like to subscribe for press cuttings, wrote this illuminating note : " Take a tip from me. When trying to get a new customer always send him a good review and

not a particularly slaughtering attack on him and his work as you have done."

Here are two tragic tales of authors. One took out a subscription for a hundred cuttings in 1920, and up to 1926 he received sixty-seven. Since then he has not had one, but he writes every three or four months reminding the bureau that he is watching the newspapers carefully. Still more tragic was the prospective author who took out a subscription for 250 cuttings in 1920, when there was no time-limit to the length of the service. He wrote a book. Three months later he asked plaintively whether there were no reviews and, consequently, cuttings about it. The bureau had also been wondering, but they had found none, and the little man had to rest content. Six months later he wrote saying that he had another book coming out, and this time he had written such a book in such forcible language that the Press would be absolutely compelled to pay a great deal of attention to it, and that the agency was to be on its toes to send him all the cuttings. Alas, this book also passed entirely unnoticed by the Press!

Twelve years ago, in order to attract new customers, the agency announced that it would give people credit to the extent of sending them cuttings up to a hundred before the customer had to pay. The result was a deluge of applications from people who had not the slightest hope of ever appearing in print unless they got run over by a tram. These people have been the greatest bane. One young lady who was the belle, so she said, of a small seaside town wrote eight months later furiously because she had not received a clipping from the local weekly paper with a circulation of a thousand or so, in which her name had appeared as one of two hundred people at a charity tea-fight. A man was furious because he, too, had not been sent a clipping about his attendance at the funeral of a grocer in a very obscure spot.

Here is the story of Amy Johnson. When she left for her Australian flight she was still very naïve about the interest it was likely to create. She subscribed for a hundred cuttings, not thinking that anyone would trouble much about her feat. In fact, more than ten thousand cuttings, all of them different, were forwarded to her. Another pilot, and a very famous one, too, was on the point of making a very dangerous ocean flight. He wrote and said that he would pay for the cuttings if he came home alive, but if he failed to do so it was understood there would be no obligation on the part of his executors. The agency accepted the challenge. He survived the flight, and, naturally, he paid.

One of this agency's most irritating clients is a Bishop who stipulated that only "important" cuttings should be sent to him. Not even *he* seems to know what he considers to be an important cutting, as you will see from the following story. When half a column about him was written on the leader page of a big newspaper and was forwarded, he replied that he had already seen this and naturally did not require it. What a life the managing director of the agency must have !

The best of all are the stories of the department which is responsible for trying to get new clients for the agency. Here is a typical letter received recently from a certain wit in a famous art-dealers' firm :

*" Dear Sirs,—No one having taken any notice of me for many years, you can imagine with what delight I received your letter of the 29th instant ; its receipt made me realize, as I never have before, that—as you rightly state—your Service goes far beyond the Press of the United Kingdom and Ireland, and your claim to be the most comprehensive press-cutting agency in the world is indeed well-founded.*

*" Please send me anything referring to myself, as all com-*

*munications—whether pleasant or otherwise—are welcome to one living so quiet a life as I.*

*"Gratefully yours,*

*"\_\_\_\_\_"*

*"P.S.—Please pardon the garrulity of a very old man. I was born in 1693."*

You will be amused at this correspondence about a famous author, beginning with the solicitation of his service :

*"December 6, 1932.*

*"Dear Sir,—There are probably a great many references to yourself, in the world's Press, in the course of the year, which do not come under your notice.*

*"Public men or Institutions need an International Press Cutting Agency to look out for their names that are likely to appear in many of the thousands of newspapers and magazines of standing which are published throughout the world.*

*"Alternatively, you may be interested in any special subject, not necessarily personal, where we could be of service to you, such as cuttings on literary, historical, scientific or technical subjects, or any particular sport or hobby. Such items would be very carefully selected and sent periodically.*

*"Our Service covers not only the Press of the United Kingdom and Ireland. It goes far beyond this, and includes thousands of the leading journals of the Empire, the Continent of Europe, and the United States. So what we offer is truly an International Service ; and we may fairly claim to be the most comprehensive of the press-cutting agencies of the world.*

*"It will give us great pleasure to extend our service on your behalf.*

*"Yours faithfully,*

*"\_\_\_\_\_"*

“ December 7, 1932.

“ Dear Sir,—With reference to your letter of December 6 to Thomas Browne, Esq., care of the above address, enclosing a cutting concerning his work ‘*Urne-buriall*,’ and inviting his subscription to your Bureau, I regret to state that the late Sir Thomas passed away on October 19, 1682, and we are uncertain of his present whereabouts.

“ Yours faithfully,

“ \_\_\_\_\_ ”

## CHAPTER XLVIII

### THE TRUTH ABOUT THE SEA-SERPENT

MOST New Year resolutions are broken almost before they are resolved. One that I did not break was to discover the real truth about sea-serpents as far as it is known. Having scoured newspaper offices, ancient works of reference, and modern compendiums about these brutes, one comes to the conclusion that there are definitely three well-established sea-serpents with unimpeachable references.

The first is the sea-serpent of Stronsay. It was washed ashore in Scotland in 1808. Patrick Neill, a local naturalist, arrived on the scene and measured it. It was 55 ft. long, with the girth of an Orkney pony and a long mane. Even though it was there for all to see, a fierce argument arose as to its species. Some said it was a sea-serpent; others they said Nay, it was a "rabbit fish" or a "basking shark"! Some of the fragments were collected and ultimately reached the Royal Scottish Museum and are still there for all to see. According to James Ritchie, of the Natural History Department of the University of Aberdeen, these fragments show that they are part of the backbone of a "gristly" fish.

Forty years later came the *Dædalus* serpent, as it is called, because it was seen by the captain, the officers, and the crew of His Majesty's frigate *Dædalus*. It was seen for twenty minutes on the voyage between the Cape of Good Hope and St. Helena. Sixty feet of its body were visible in a straight line on the surface. It was calculated that there must have been at least another 40 ft. under water. It was "travelling" at 15 m.p.h. Its jaws were full of jagged teeth!

The third sea-serpent generally accepted in the best

monstrous circles is the *Valhalla* sea-serpent. There is every kind of evidence about this chap. Two scientists, Mr. E. G. B. Meade-Waldo and Mr. J. Nicholl, were cruising off Brazil in 1905 in Lord Crawford's yacht *Valhalla*. They saw "a huge serpent-like dark-green body showing 6 ft. of fringed back above the surface, and 3 ft. more in front of the frill, part of an 8-ft. neck. It had a turtle-like head and a white belly." The experts could not tell its full length, but they saw a dark shadow behind and beneath the frill suggesting endless possibilities. They were genuinely scared; their hands quivered like aspens, and Lord Crawford afterwards said that even if they had had cameras they could not possibly have taken the photograph, they were trembling so much. Both experts drew pictures of what they saw as soon as they had recovered.

Now for the other sea-serpents. Sea-serpents figure in the mythology of most island races and seafaring nations. Norwegians have for centuries believed in the Kraken. The Irish believe in the Gorramooloch, a sea-serpent which flies in the air, can be 100 ft. long, but "leaps principally at night." Aristotle refers to the giant sea-serpents which attacked the Libyan galleys and sunk them. The Burmese believe in the Nyam. And so it goes.

The nephew of the Italian Minister to Norway, in his *Narrative of the North-Eastern Frosty Seas*, in 1552 talked of sea-serpents of "huge bigness." The next recorded sea-serpent was observed in 1638 off Lynn in Massachusetts. In 1734 Bishop Egede saw a sea-serpent off Greenland. It had a long, sharp snout and blew water like a whale. It had large, broad jaws and was over 100 ft. long. Twelve years later Captain De Ferry described a monster with a head like a horse, black eyes, and a white mane. Nine years later we come to the illustrious Bishop Pontoppidan of Bergen. He is generally considered as the author of the legend of the sea-

serpent, which he describes at great length, giving various instances. His sea-serpents were capable of devouring several oxen at a time, and were equally as good on land as they were on the water. For some reason or other all well-established sea-serpents, with one exception, travel whether on land or sea at 15 miles an hour—no more and no less.

It begins to become noticeable at this point that an extraordinarily high percentage of observers of sea-serpents have been clerical dignitaries of some kind or other. After the Bishop of Bergen, twelve years later comes the Bishop of Droubleim, who vouched for a local sea-serpent. Mr. McLean, the minister of Eigg, described a sea-serpent 80 ft. long in 1809. Sixty-two years later the Rev. J. Brown, of Kilkee, saw one with a head like a horse a few yards away from him. Not to be outdone, the Rev. John Macrae and the Rev. David Tuppeny saw one a year later on the west coast of Scotland.

These clerical sponsors of the sea-serpent continue into the present century, when a clergyman on holiday at Tintagel in 1908 said that he had seen a maned sea-serpent of which 20 ft. showed above the surface about 200 yds. from the shore.

The other main class of sea-serpent scrutineers are, not surprisingly, captains and chief officers of ships. Taking instances at random, we find that the captain of the French gunboat *Décidée* saw an enormous turtle-headed sea-serpent off Haiphong in 1904 with a 100-ft. tail and a soft black skin with marble spots, blowing up two jets of water to a height of 50 ft. This chap was unusual. He seems to be the only sea-serpent on record who cruised at half speed at eight knots.

The second officer of the SS. *Corinthian* claimed to have seen a remarkable monster on August 30, 1913, in mid-ocean. He said that it had bonny blue eyes, cried like a child, possessed a neck 20 ft. long, a body 50 ft. long, long ears and a snout, five big flapping fins, and a brownish-yellow undercarriage.

His name—I mean the man who saw it—was Mr. G. Batchelor, and he actually drew what he saw.

In 1875 an instance was recorded of a sea-serpent attacking a school of sperm whales off Sicily. Apparently it curled itself round its victim's body like a boa constrictor, and there were loud cracking sounds as the whale's ribs broke under the strain.

The most interesting case was that of the *Armada* sea-serpent of 1905—interesting because it was made immortal by Rudyard Kipling, who happened to be on the ship at the time of the occurrence. At 3 p.m. on December 20, latitude 3 degrees south of the Equator, the ship's perpendicular stern struck a sea-serpent in the middle, thus doubling the head across the port side, and the body and tail along the starboard side of the bows. The marks left by its terrible flippers showed it was 57 ft. long, allowing for the bend. It was estimated at being 8 ft. in diameter. It had a blunt, barrel-shaped head. Its right eye was large and protruding, though this may well have been brought about, says a sympathetic spectator, "by the dreadfully strained position of the poor, struggling brute. Everybody on board grieved that such a magnificent specimen of God's beautiful creation should have been done to death in so ignoble a manner." You probably remember Kipling's story, *Matter of Fact*. It tells of an Englishman, an American, and a Dutchman who were on a voyage and saw a monstrous sea-serpent. The Dutchman and the American (they were all professional writers) decided after a long time that no editor or publisher would accept the story as being true, and gave it up as a bad job. The Englishman, on the other hand, wrote it and submitted it for publication as a work of fiction. That is just what Rudyard Kipling did. It is therefore really a tale within a tale.

The late Lord Northcliffe had a great deal to do with the sea-serpent stories. Being the most brilliant journalist of all

time, he realized, of course, that man is essentially superstitious and ready to believe in the weird and the unusual, if only to take his mind off the dreary routine of his everyday life. Everybody likes to gossip and have something at which to be surprised. It furnishes an admirable topic of conversation and gives everybody a chance of trying out his talent as a story-teller. There is no law against telling fibs about sea-serpents. Nobody can check up on you, so your gift of elaboration costs nothing and affords a great deal of pleasurable publicity.

Thus it was that at the beginning of this century the sea-serpent season genuinely came into being. It was at least as regular as the arrival of the letters at the newspaper offices about the first cuckoo of the year. There are many references to the sea-serpent season in the newspapers of the day, for they were even more sceptical about it then than they were in 1934. Commenting on the story of the 30-ft. sea-serpent with three fins, a scaly head, and red goggle eyes seen in September, 1908, at Donaghadee, an editorial comment was that the season had begun later than usual. Three years before that another newspaper joyously announced that the German Navy had issued directions to naval officers as to their behaviour in the emergency of meeting a sea-serpent. Whether this was true or not I have no means of telling.

A sea-serpent with a fine moustache was the contribution of 1906. That of 1912 was one at Amherst Island, Ontario, which stole cans of milk and food. This is the only recorded instance of a dishonest sea-serpent. In most instances they appear to be law-abiding, harmless, rather timid fellows without an ounce of vice in them.

That same year there was a delicious headline, "What made Miss Rider Haggard?" The novelist's niece reported a sea-serpent travelling at 60 m.p.h. out to sea. This was obviously wrong, because sea-serpents, as I have already

pointed out, always travel at 15 m.p.h. A few days later it was conclusively proved that she had seen a flight of terns.

The year 1912 was indeed a vintage year for sea-serpents. The late Sir Hiram Maxim said he believed in them and that in 1857 he had known of a sea serpent which would cover a mile in three minutes. When cruising at this speed it was eluded by the mackerel which it was chasing. They jumped out of the water and out of the way fifty at a time. Also in 1912 it was announced that after an absence of forty years a sea-serpent with a head like a bucket had reappeared in Lake Minnetonka. This followed a rather lean year. In 1911 Chatham had a sea-serpent with green eyes, a cow head, and a hump. But that was the solitary apparition of its kind.

A month before the Great War an Arab sailor fell off a tramp steamer called the *Strathspey* and actually felt the hot breath on his back from a great green serpent which pursued him. Fortunately he escaped, and the furious monster bit off the rudder of the boat in his rage, and then turned east at fifty knots—quite the wrong pace, however bad-tempered it had become.

In one very highbrow English magazine a passionate defence of the sea-serpent occurred shortly after the War. The writer, after talking about the grey-and-yellow sea-serpent of Captain Melhuish of 1877, and other examples, said with bitterness how regrettable it was that the spirit of ridicule and inane laughter is so prominent when sea-serpents are mentioned. He pointed out that the years 1870 to 1878 were unusually prolific in these stories. But by this time derision had done its fell work, and the sea-serpent stories from then until the end of the century were significantly few. No doubt, he said, they were seen just as often, but mariners did not wish to be laughed at. That seems fair enough. He ended with a quotation from Montaigne—the one which goes: "Reason has instructed me that to condemn a thing as false and im-

possible is to presume to set limits to God's will and the power of nature."

I seem to have left out one or two other instances of sea-serpents. There was the *Umfuli* sea-serpent in 1893, seen off the north-west coast of Africa. He travelled at the accepted speed of 15 m.p.h., was 80 ft. long, and had a swan-like neck. The master of the *Umfuli*, when asked three or four years ago to give further details, refused on the grounds that he had suffered so much ridicule. Three or four years ago the chief officer and the fourth officer of the *Ceramic* saw a sea-serpent feeding itself with its flippers between Sydney and Durban; and in May 1917 H.M.S. *Hilary*, on patrol off Iceland, used an 80-ft. sea-serpent as a target for anti-submarine practice. They opened fire at 1,200 yds. with six-pounders, scored a direct hit, and within ten days were themselves torpedoed and sunk, taking with them all records and photographs of the incident. Nemesis, indeed!

What conclusion can be drawn from all this? The answer seems to be that sea-serpents can be suggested by schools of porpoises, ribbon-fish, swordfish, the tentacles of big cuttlefish, strands of seaweed, low-flying flights of birds—and drink. Various treatises of an historical and critical nature have been written on the subject of the sea-serpent, the most notable being in 1892. The author was A. C. Cudemans, junior, a director of the Royal Zoological and Botanical Society at The Hague. It seems to be generally accepted that the sea-serpent, if it exists, has a turtle-like head, a fringe, a length of 80 to 100 ft., a comparatively lean body, an ability to travel at fifteen knots, and great timidity. It is astonishing, however, that, with the exception of the sea-serpent of Stronsay, no specimen has ever been seen long enough to be measured from tip to tail.

People with a gift of imagination have described various specimens as having a head like a Newfoundland dog, a horse,

a cow, a sheep, a bulldog, and an alligator. Some say that it has a mouth large enough to hold three men. Others say that it has small, twinkling eyes. That seems to be the right note on which to finish.

By the way, do any of you remember *Moby Dick*?

## CHAPTER XLIX

### THE LURE OF THE LIMELIGHT

IT is one of the signs of the times, and of the sudden activity in British moving pictures, that if anybody loses his or her job nowadays somebody will say, "Oh, well, why not go on the films?" It is common knowledge that for crowd-work, where no technical experience of films is necessary, the payment is a guinea a day, and in some cases more. By simple arithmetic this is 6 guineas a week—with a day off on Sundays—or £327 12s. a year. The optimist further hopes that soon a small-part job will be available, and that finally a dazzling career as a full-fledged star at, say, £200 a week will result.

Alas for these vain imaginings! You remember the Hollywood film about three years ago when the local belle goes to Los Angeles to become a star? She is accompanied by her father, mother, brother, and the maid. After they have been there about six months the father, mother, brother, and maid all get jobs as character actors, but the pretty girl is still making the round of the studios without success. Life is even grimmer at Elstree, Twickenham, Beaconsfield, Islington, and the other English film studios.

But I must not go ahead too fast. In Los Angeles they have a central casting bureau where everybody registers. I forget the size of the list, but it runs into many thousands; and while many call, few are chosen. It is not quite the same in England. The time has not yet arrived when the craze for going on the films has reached such a height that an official bureau of would-be actors and actresses is compulsory. But if other English producers follow the example of Mr. Michael Balcon, who spends £1,000,000 on an annual output of fifty-two films

a year, which is one a week, something will have to be done. Already all the big American film companies are contemplating the erection of film studios in England in order to keep pace with the ever-rising film quota, and, too, the dropping pound. So the film-producing companies may soon have to start an official casting bureau.

Meantime, however, anybody who wants to go on the films goes to 92 Regent Street. I went myself to see what happened. My original plan was to present myself anonymously as a seeker after crowd-work, and then tell the story. But my patience would not permit of this. I had turned out of Regent Street up a little arcade with hats and handbags in the windows. I had observed no sign that I was about to enter the most important film agency in this country until I saw a little notice to the effect that artistes were asked not to clutter up the scenery, or words to that effect. A lift then took me to the second floor and then, passing through a glass door, I saw a room crowded with would-be actors and actresses. They were of every age and both sexes, but most of them were old. They hung about patiently.

I waited ten minutes, and then decided on the cowardly course of making myself known to the management, and asking them to tell me what would have happened if I had gone through with the experiment incognito. The answer was that sooner or later I would have presented myself, photographs in hand, either to Connie herself (for this agency, as all film actors will have guessed already, is Connie's), or to Lily, the secretary, or to one of her staff. Connie, Lily, or one of the others would then have asked me if I had had any stage or film experience. If, as I would have had to, I told them that I had had none, I would have probably received a small sad lecture on the follies of trying to make money out of going on the films, culminating in the advice that I should get the idea out of my head immediately.

If I had remained stubborn, one of the quartette would take my name and address, my photograph and telephone number. And then, supposing my clothes had been fashionable enough, I would perhaps have been docketed as Graves, Charles, 70 Gloucester Place, Portman Square, W.1, Paddington 2985, crowd-work, no stage or film experience. And that would probably have been that. The chances would be that in the course of the next few months I might be asked to present myself a dozen times, for which I would receive a guinea a go, and in return would hang about some studios for ten hours, and ultimately be one of two hundred people whose photographs appeared in a crowd scene at Ascot or in a night club.

You see, the trouble with me is that I do not come under any particular category, any more than you do in all probability. I am neither very fat, nor bearded, nor bald, nor can I imitate dogs barking or even hens laying eggs. I do not possess a knife-grinding machine, nor am I a contortionist. For, as is only reasonable when you come to think of it, anybody who can be graded as anything particular is docketed as such. And now for a few statistics. At Connie's alone no fewer than 35,000 people are registered as actual or potential film actors and film actresses. Of these, barely 10 per cent. make a living out of it. And a living, mind you, is considered to mean only £100 a year. Those people who make £200 a year out of crowd-work are extremely limited, and even they make most of it on the side. That is to say, they make it out of posing for commercial firms who want pretty girls to photograph in the act of eating their toffee, clicking their cameras, putting on their silk stockings, or advertising in some other way their goods. For it is quite a normal procedure for an advertising agent who wants a pretty model to walk into Connie's, thumb through the photographs of pretty girls who specialize in smart crowd-work, and then send for them to pose in a new bathing-dress or the latest

ski-ing outfit. It is not film work, but it is all part of the game and an essential part, too.

To revert, though, to the 35,000 people registered at Connie's, 99 per cent. of them are tabulated under one of the hundred sub-divisions. The remainder are filed under "miscellaneous."

Here are some of the grades :

Leading men	Butlers and men-servants
Juvenile leading men	Bald-headed men
Smart part men	French maids
Juvenile leading girls	Men and girl swimmers
Leading ladies	Italian types
Vamps	Very fat women
Leading aristocratic elderly ladies	Doctors, solicitors, clergy
Leading character ladies	Fencers
Good small part character ladies	Very fat men
Comedians—leads	Indians—both sexes
Comediennes—leads	Men and women who can ride horses
Aristocratic leading elderly men	Girls with nice legs
Small part men	Nurses and maids
Small part ladies	Japanese
People with motor-cars	Small girls
Motor-cyclists	Germans
Bearded men	Babies
Doubles—ladies	Jews
Small part girls	Boys over sixteen
Policemen, detectives, commissionaires	Aeroplane pilots
Waiters	Negroes
Footmen	Vocalists
	Girls with long hair
	Dark mannequins
	Short-haired flappers

Long-haired flappers	"Doubles" of well-known
Fair mannequins	stars
Smart elderly crowd men	Singers, bathing girls, and
Classical dancers	naval officers
Extraordinary types — men	Boxers and toughs
and women	Smart young company
Animals and animal trainers	directors
Barmaids	Scotch and Irish types
Girls with Eton crops	Smart elderly crowd ladies
Dudes	

You might think that this is pretty comprehensive. But there is yet another grade. This is the "miscellaneous" which I mentioned earlier. The first on the miscellaneous list is Mr. L. Wellman. Mr. Wellman's speciality is the ownership of a chestnut barrow. There is another chestnut merchant, but he is an old man. Others in the list are :

Two B.B.C. announcers	A circus riding master
Acrobats	A whistler and paper-tearer
A rope-spinning act	Ben George, a yodeller
A foot equilibrist	Jack Baxter, who has a Punch
Alf Sydney, "Good for any	and Judy show
stunt"	Two conjurers
Three tumblers	Pam Harris, "can typewrite"
Two animal mimics	Mrs. A. Green, "very, very
Parachutists and trick motor-	ugly, dark, long hair"
cyclists	

It will be seen that there are not more than three of any of the miscellaneous types. Some of the statistics of the previous types are also interesting.

Thus, so high is the standard demanded of the girls with nice legs, that there are only three rated as such out of the whole 35,000 people registered at Connie's. I was told, in-

cidentally, that there is not much demand for them now with the long skirt fashions. The aeroplane pilots number nine all told. Of bearded men there are thirty. There is a round dozen of very fat women—two more than the number of very fat men. There is a similar supply of completely bald-headed men, but there were only nine girls left with Eton crops when I was there last.

On the whole, it would appear that if you do not already possess the stage or film experience which would qualify you for a small part, the best thing to be is a smart crowd girl. Even then you will be lucky if you make as much as £4 a week, and you will never know at what time of day or night your telephone will ring and the call will come to appear in full evening dress at 8 o'clock next morning. It is one of the coincidences of smart crowd girls that nearly all of them live north of Hyde Park. Girl after girl lives in Maida Vale, Harrow, Hampstead, Pinner, and other N. or N.W. localities.

But here is another sad fact. I cannot remember the name of a single star, except Merle Oberon, who was originally in the crowd-work and then caught the eye of a director. It apparently happens often enough in Hollywood. But over here directors work differently. You cannot, in fact, name a single English film star, they tell me, who ever did crowd-work, again excepting Merle. On the contrary, if any member of the crowd catches the eye of the director it probably means that he is catching the eye of the camera, is spoiling the shot and, in fact, is qualifying for instant dismissal.

Take the sad little story of the son of the gardener who came from Welwyn to Elstree to interview the casting-director. He arrived with about four dozen automatic-machine photographs of himself. In order to pay for them he had sold his lawn-mower. In each of these photographs he was expressing some kind of emotion. In one, for example, he wore a shawl round his head, and he was

depicting the suffering on the face of a mariner whose trusty vessel was approaching an iceberg which successively strikes it and sinks it. Out of pity the casting-director engaged him in crowd-work. But alas ! his zeal outran his discretion. The scene was a Ruritanian Royal wedding procession, and the crowds, of which the gardener's boy was one, were instructed to wave their hands and handkerchiefs, and generally look loyal. The gardener's boy, with his mind full of young hopefuls in Hollywood who caught the director's eye and made their fortune, jumped about 6 ft. into the air, yelling like a dervish. This completely wrecked the sequence, and the young man was told to draw his guinea, never to return.

All kinds of people go to Elstree. There are pretty girls who walk all the way out there from London instead of going to 92 Regent Street, to register there in the proper way. There are ex-leading ladies of the musical-comedy stage of thirty years ago who are only too glad to receive occasional £6-a-week jobs doing tiny parts as charwomen. There are all kinds of eccentrics and people with big ideas.

One old man arrived and produced his card with a flourish. It said Professor Blank, the World's Greatest Wizard. The poor old boy was carrying brown-paper parcels under each arm and a bread-book full of humorous scenarios that were going to make Charlie Chaplin look like a deaf mute. He had apparently got hold of some old-fashioned magical book full of instructions about optical delusions like *Pygmalion and Galatea*. He had a cap with a piece of string attached to the peak of it which he suddenly pulled up and down, grimacing the while. He was explaining that this was part of his spectacular scenario, *The Chase of the Inhuman Man*. The climax of it was to be when he climbed the roof of Scotland Yard and then, seizing a chimney-pot, killed with successive blows all the members of the Flying Squad who

had been brave enough to follow him. "Of course," he said, "it won't be a real chimney-pot. My idea—I thought of it myself—is that it should be made of cardboard." He went on to say that he proposed to make his fortune in two years. Certainly he never intended to return to the barber's shop near the West India Docks. That is a tragic story, but so are many of those who listen to their neighbours and are convinced that all they need do is to call at Elstree or Connie's and receive a long contract immediately.

"One must really be a psychologist when dealing with these people," I was told. "They all tell you that they are born actors, like one fellow who came along and said he was such a born actor that he could express every emotion under the sun at a moment's notice. He said he could laugh or cry instantaneously. This was rather hopeful. So I asked him to cry. He brightened up at once when he realized he was about to be given an audition, then he screwed up his face, sniffed heavily, made choking sounds, but not a tear would come. After wrestling with himself for two or three minutes he asked, half blubbering, whether he might go outside for a second, as he would then return weeping hard. So he went out and then came back. But still he could not cry. Finally, he said that if a single sympathetic note of music was played, the tears would course down his cheeks like a waterfall. But really I had no time to try yet another experiment." One of the casting-director's greatest trials is the mother with the small son "who is another Jackie Coogan," or the small daughter "who is a second Mitzi Green." These Jackie Coogans are the most dreadful little pests. They arrive in patent leather shoes carrying ornamental canes and wearing grown-up clothes. "If there is one thing I do not like," said an official at Connie's, "it is precocious children. And the precocity of some of them is unbelievable. Worse still, when the

time comes for them to go, the mothers say : ' Now, Jackie, show your manners and kiss the nice Mr. Allen good-bye.' "

Another of the trials of a casting-director and film agencies is the number of people who are told by all their friends that they are the living image of some well-known Hollywood film stars. Among the men, Jack Holts and Lewis Stones are the most common. Greta Garbos and Constance Bennetts head the list of the girl film-aspirants. But the resemblance is never more than fleeting. And usually there is none at all.

To return to the subject of crowd-work and Connie's, it appears that calls from film directors who suddenly want a large number of extras come in cycles. There was one hectic week when no fewer than 2,000 people were wanted for crowd-work. Usually the calls are for anything from five to thirty people. There may be as many as ten or fifteen of these in a day. But there are days when there are none at all.

On other occasions a crowd of 250 will be wanted for a whole week at some place like Tilbury. Transport is always arranged for the crowds. Usually they go by motor-coaches, but sometimes by a special train.

Such, then, is the chance of the film-struck girl or boy to reach the top. It is a practically forlorn one unless they have had some stage experience. Possibly the time will come, of course, when directors will regularly take a chance and take somebody out of crowd-work and star her. But it has not yet arrived, and until it does, I should not advise anybody who has anything better to do to attempt the carving out of a career on the films. Unless they have had previous professional engagements, they will never get anything more than crowd-work, and little enough of that. Nothing was ever more deceptive than the " guinea-a-day " business. The crowds get their guinea a day all right, but they are only able to earn it twice a week at the outside.

So now you know.

## CHAPTER L

### TEACHING THEM ENGLISH

AGAIN and again we read in the theatrical columns of the newspapers that some foreign actress or actor has arrived in England knowing nothing but their native tongue and then, a fortnight later, we hear them at the first night speaking English as though they had learnt it as children. How is it done? The answer is that they all go to the same teacher in the same studio in Baker Street. It may be Anny Ahlers, who made such a hit in *The Dubarry*, or Francis Lederer, or Autori, or George Metaxa, or the various stars in *Casanova*, or even Sessue Hayakawa, or Carl Brisson. Yet they are only a handful who have been taught by Miss Flossie Freedman, who is known as Freedy throughout the stage world. She has a fund of good stories about all of them.

Miss Freedman is a woman of immense vitality and still more immense patience. Some of her clients have had to be taught English by pantomime until they get the first few dozen key words. For though Miss Freedman can talk English, Yiddish, German, and French, she does not know Russian, or Hungarian, or Japanese, and some of the other more outlandish tongues. "My most brilliant pupils have undoubtedly been Francis Lederer and Anny Ahlers," Miss Freedman told me. "Francis Lederer is extremely intelligent. He came over here not knowing a single word of English. When we worked he had a German dictionary in front of him all the time, and insisted on looking up the equivalents so that he could paraphrase and understand exactly what he was going to say on the stage. When he was acting in *Autumn Crocus* he agreed to play the leading part in *Volpone* for a single

performance at the Garrick. At 11.45 p.m. I went to his dressing-room and coached him until 3 a.m. Then we went to Lyons's Corner House and sat there until 7 a.m. The manager knew us, and so there we sat, with his sheepdog and my peke and a German dictionary and the script. We must have been a funny sight. When Francis came over first we used to sit at Lyons's night after night. On one occasion he had to say, in reading his part, 'I will complain to the management.' At once an agitated waiter hurried up to find what was wrong. In *The Cat and the Fiddle* rehearsals he had to do a passionate love scene. So we sat as far away as possible from everybody. His first appearance in England was in a failure called *My Sister and I*. I taught him for about ten hours a day for weeks. Then he was picked for *Autumn Crocus*, and asked me to go out with him to Hampstead Heath to teach him how to say his words. It was April, and shivering cold. I sat on a stump of a tree while he walked up and down saying his part. As he did so some Boy Scouts came along. 'Oh,' said Francis, 'look at them! I used to be a Boy Girl-Guide myself.' Most foreigners find the greatest difficulty in pronouncing 'Th.' But Francis has a marvellous ear, and it did not worry him. But 'word' and 'world' he found hard to pronounce. His greatest ambition is to talk English without any accent whatever. I told him that a slight accent was attractive.

"All that Anny Ahlers knew when she came over here was 'Good-bye,' and 'Commend me to your step-daughter.' But she had a very good ear, too. The words she found most difficult to say were 'love' and 'all.' It is very hard to make foreigners pronounce it as 'luv' instead of 'lof.' Soon she was so thrilled at her improvement that she corrected other people's pronunciation. 'My darling,' she said to me, 'my langridge is lofly, just like English, every day better and better. I from the audience had letters from mans, yes.'

On another occasion a German tried to say, 'That is so' in front of her. 'No, no,' she said, 'you must not say "zat" is so. It is not so good pronouncing. You must say "dat" is so.' She herself always says 'greetest' for 'greatest.'"

Miss Freedman paused for a moment and then went on :

"It takes a month off my life every time I go to a first night when one of my foreign pupils is taking part. I sit there crossing my thumbs, and praying that they will not lose their nerve and forget their lines or mispronounce their words. So far I have never been let down, although the strain of speaking a foreign language in a foreign country in front of the first-night audience and the critics must be terrific. Before the first night of *Casanova* I worked for seven weeks in the wings, watching the scenes closely and coaching the foreign stars in relays under the watchful eyes of Erik Charell. There was the Italian Casanova, and the Norwegian Laura, and the Viennese Barberina, and the Russian gipsy girl. All had to be taught English.

"One of the worst pupils I ever had was George Metaxa. He had an extremely bad ear and did not seem very keen to learn. The worst of all was Tilly Brisson, Carl Brisson's sister. Although she had lived in England for ten years she could hardly speak any English when her brother wanted her to play 'Frou-Frou' in the *Merry Widow*. The trouble with that family is that they always talk Danish when they are together. And they always are together. She seemed entirely tone-deaf. When I pronounced a word and told her to repeat it, she enunciated something totally different. I told her that Carl would not accept any mistakes, and would think it was my fault and not hers. She said, 'Darling, you had many foreign peoples worser than me.' 'Darling,' I replied, 'you are far and away the worst.' Whereupon she wept, but when the first night came, it turned out perfectly. Carl Brisson was also one of my pupils.

"Autori, being an Italian, was very hard to teach. They always are. The Russians are the easiest. Oskar Denes, who made such a hit in *Viktoria and her Hussar*, did not know a word of English when he arrived in England on a Sunday. He stood in Trafalgar Square absolutely baffled. Somehow he found his way to Sir Alfred Butt and begged to be allowed to go back to Germany. But Sir Alfred Butt was adamant and sent him to me. After he had been taking lessons from me for a week, another of my pupils, Estelle Brody, came in—Oh, yes, I have to teach Americans how to speak English, too. Instead of saying 'How d'ye do?' however, he kissed her hand and said, 'I love she.'

"The trouble with Americans is that they will never sound a 't' or a 'th,' and they always say 'awflee' for 'awfully.' I also had to teach Justine Johnstone. When she played in *Toni* with Jack Buchanan, she insisted at rehearsals on saying in reply to the question, 'Who is he?' 'Oh, he is now a coynel.' It took me hours to teach her to say 'colonel.' Other Americans I have taught include Billy Bradford, Ula Sharron, and the Dodge Twins. I also have to teach North Country people how to speak English. Several M.P.s have come to me to learn how to make themselves understood in the House of Commons. Their chief trouble, of course, is the letter 'u.' By contrast, I had to teach John Stuart, over the telephone, how to put on a North Country accent for his part in *Atlantic*.

"What I usually do with foreigners, to get them to pronounce 'th,' is to stick out my tongue and then brush my teeth with my finger and then make them do the same. Very often their voices have to be lowered. Sessue Hayakawa talked up at the top of his head when he first came to me. But I made him repeat Kipling's 'If' after me, and in each line I made my voice and his descend in the scale, until after a few weeks I produced a very fine baritone out of him.

“When Grete Natzler, the ‘Barberina’ in *Casanova*, came to me, she already knew a little English. ‘If I go to bed at twelve at night,’ she said, ‘I can stand up at ten and be with you at eleven.’ With her, as with Sessue and most of my other pupils, I insisted that she should lean back and close her eyes while I said her lines for her, and then made her repeat them. One day Rosarti, the Italian, came to me. He had two lessons a day and was so quick that I believe I could have taken his accent away altogether. The trouble was that he had to play the part of a foreigner. So I had to leave him some. Yet when he came to me first, and I said ‘Good-morning,’ he said stolidly ‘*Italiano*.’ I said ‘*Parlez-vous français?*’ He said ‘*Italiano*.’ I then asked him if he spoke German. He said ‘*Italiano*.’ I said ‘Come in.’ He stood still. I said ‘Sit down.’ He still stayed where he was. So I pulled him into the room and plunked him on a chair and said, ‘That means sit down; now repeat it.’ Then I made him stand up and made him repeat ‘Stand up.’ We did this twenty times. By that time he realized that he had better surrender and he did—and became one of my quickest pupils.

“French actors and actresses find our aitches very difficult. They like to put them in all over the place. One actress kept on saying, ‘Hi don’t know why hi hargue with you.’ Another took a lot of persuading to stop saying ‘Heaven and hearth.’ On their first night I crossed my thumbs and prayed, and sure enough the aitches had disappeared as if by magic. One of the greatest compliments I received was when Alexandre d’Arcy, a French-Egyptian, had ten lessons from me in English, and then, when he did a test for a talkie, was told that his English was better than his French.

“Stutterers, too, I have taught. I have discovered that the best way to make them speak normal English is to get them to repeat words aloud while they are writing them

down. Their concentration on the writing makes them forget their nervousness in speaking.

"I do not always teach my pupils at home. I have told you about Francis Lederer and Lyons's Corner House. I once gave an actress a lesson in the waiting-room at Victoria Station, and I have gone to Manchester on the midnight train at ten minutes' notice to teach a foreign juvenile lead how to make love in English in time for the first performance.

"I was only thirteen and a half when I was qualified a teacher of Hebrew and gave my first lessons. I have been at it for nearly a quarter of a century, and all I can say is that it is a great life if you don't weaken."

## CHAPTER LI

### RUSSIAN ROYALTIES IN EXILE

IF, in 1917, Great Britain had been smudged out as a royalist and capitalist nation like Russia, very few of our aristocrats would have found it easy to earn a livelihood when exiled in a foreign country. To-day it would be a different matter. We have dukes actively interested in meat extract companies, belted earls busy with coach building, marquesses earning a livelihood from gossip-writing or life insurance, and countesses conducting successful laundries. When the crash came in 1917 and 1918 in Russia, it would have been impossible to find any class in any country more ill-prepared to earn a living for themselves. Even the wine business, banking, and stockbroking, which for a few years had been tolerated as respectable professions among the Upper Four Hundred in England, were still considered entirely impossible for men of noble birth in Russia. As for a woman earning a living—the thought was unthinkable.

Picture, then, the enormity of the disaster which overtook the heads of the many noble, princely, and even royal families of Russia when they had to escape for their lives. Few were as lucky as Prince Felix Youssopoff, who had time to get his biggest jewels sewed as buttons on his suits and overcoats. These refugees arrived in London by way of Paris in most instances without a penny. Here at the old Russian Imperial Embassy, M. Eugene Sabline, whose brother had been second in command of the Tsar's yacht, and who himself was the last Imperial Russian Chargé d'Affaires at the Court of St. James's, managed to look after them for a while. At least he could arrange for them to have temporary accommodation, and for

their children to be educated, somehow, in English schools. But soon the little stock of money ran out, and these princes and princesses had to fend for themselves. I know many of them myself. I knew many of them when they had to decide whether to have a white waistcoat washed, and chance an invitation to dinner, or to guarantee themselves at least one square meal a day of sausage and mash.

Once I ragged Prince George of Russia about his always being seen at so many parties and spending so much time in the supper room at a dance. He explained it quite simply. He had not had anything for luncheon, and was naturally a little peckish by supper time. Seeing him in his faultless tail coat and white waistcoat, I could scarcely believe him. But it was true enough. Later on he got a job with a firm of interior decorators in Victoria, and did quite well. To-day he is a floor walker, I believe, in the largest department store in New York. So far, he has not yet sold his title to a rich heiress. His sister, the Princess Vera of Russia, lives with German relatives on the Continent. She is very keen about girl guides and other philanthropic but unremunerative interests.

The head of the Russian Royalists to-day is the Grand Duke Cyril. He lives at St. Briac, near Dinard. He has little money. But the casino proprietors are glad to invite him to the best table on gala nights.

The Grand Duchess Xenia, mother of Princess Youssopoff, was given Frogmore Cottage on her escape from Russia. Frogmore Cottage is in Windsor Park, and is the property of the King. Here usually she lives, overlooking a pretty garden, with Mlle. Evreinoff, her lady-in-waiting. But her sons are scattered. Prince Andrew of Russia lives in Paris. Prince Theodore lives in Paris. Prince Rostislav works in a store in New York. Prince Nikita used to be the manager of a dressmaker's shop off the Champs Elysées. Prince

Vassili sells perfume in the United States. Prince Dmitri was assistant manager at Chanel's, having married the very attractive daughter of the manager, Prince Koutousoff. He is now with a firm of stockbrokers in Paris. One night we dined in a party at the Embassy Club and Prince Dmitri was still royal enough to sulk when anybody asked his wife to dance. He never took the floor himself. Most of the Russian Royalties, though, have acclimatized themselves to the strangely democratic world of to-day.

Princess Maria Bariatinski I first met when she and her mother were eking out a precarious existence as dress designers in a little side street off Kensington. Since then she has married the immaculate James Binnie Ford, a Guards officer. Her mother lives in the South of France, I believe. The Grand Duke Dmitri married Miss Audrey Emery and had her created Princess Illynska. He is the only Grand Duke who still lives in a grand ducal way. His wife is rich, and he enjoys himself, as before, on the number thirty-two at roulette in the casino at Monte Carlo. You see him everywhere—at Quinto's, at Ciro's, at the Savoy, at the Café de Paris, at the Casanova, at the Sporting Club.

The Grand Duchess Zia of Russia and the Grand Duchess Nadja of Russia also were lucky enough to find haven in a happy marriage. Sir Harold Wernher, the husband of the first-named, is immensely rich. Lord Milford Haven, though a cousin of the King, is not so well off, but he has any number of pleasant directorates, and the former Grand Duchess's course is steered on comparatively gilded wheels.

Prince Serge Obolensky married, for the second time of asking, Miss Alice Astor. He is a very good-looking fellow. But a few months ago the crash—and a divorce at Reno—occurred. To-day he is credited with having become engaged to an even richer American heiress, if that is possible. Her name is Taylor.

Prince Youssopoff, to whom I have already referred, started a dressmaker's establishment both in London and Paris, but he was badly advised, and now, having lost most of his money, he spends the greater part of the year in Corsica. Prince Serge Belosselsky-Belozersky managed to escape with enough money to buy a small house and a garden at Tonbridge, where he potters peacefully away. Of his two boys Serge is the social manager of the *Olympic*, and Andrew has been doing quite well by translating books out of the original Russian. These Princes and Princesses have done all kinds of jobs in the past fourteen years. Princess Yourievsky sang at the Coliseum on several occasions. But music hall life palled on her, and she now lives very quietly outside London.

Then we come to the enterprising and princely family of the Galitzines. One of them married Colonel Zinovieff, who started as a taxicab driver in London, and now has a small garage where you can hire private cars. Prince Vladimir Galitzine runs that charming little antique shop in Berkeley Street. His brother—and this is perhaps most interesting of all—has just been allowed by the Bolsheviks to leave Russia after fifteen years of revolution. He has been starved, imprisoned, and exiled to Siberia. Strangely enough, it was while in exile that he met his present wife—the Countess Carloff—who had also been deported. They married in prison, and their children, who have returned with them to England, were actually born in the prison hospital. Of the other Galitzines, Prince Nicolas married an English wife and is quite well off. And the husband of Countess Kleinmichael, who is Princess Vladimir Galitzine's sister, is working with a British firm of dairy products.

Next door to Prince Vladimir Galitzine's shop in Berkeley Street is Marie Pierre. Marie Pierre is Princess Troubetzkoy, who, before her second marriage, was Princess Chavchavadze. Her son is that brilliant pianist, George Chavchavadze. George,

knowing that there are far fewer good Russian pianists than Russian princes, never uses his title on the concert platform. He has risen to a point where he can charge fifty pounds an evening for playing at a private house. George was lucky. His family realized that he had musical talent far above the ordinary while he was still a child, and at the age of thirteen he was sent from Russia to become a pupil at the Leschetitzky School in Vienna, the most successful product of whom is undoubtedly Moisevitch. Now George gives musical concerts in Copenhagen, New York, Dublin, Paris, Ottawa, Bournemouth, and has filled the Queen's Hall to the full with a recital of his own. Brahms, Chopin, and the Russian composers are his favourites. His sister, Princess Maria Chavchavadze, works at the League of Nations at Geneva. She is a pretty girl, and does not visit London often enough. When I saw her last she told me that she was just finishing a novel on the theme of the young exiled royalists. "Any of us," she said, "who wants to work can achieve something, even though our ancestors were lazy for centuries. What I have noticed among the young people of my own age is a tremendous love of Russia. Even those who were born abroad are exceedingly patriotic and insist on learning and speaking Russian. Of course, I was too young to remember much about home before the Revolution. But this I can well remember—a feeling of tremendous fear among the grown-ups that something was going to happen. Actually we did not leave Russia for two years after the Revolution, and I had a rotten time as the only bourgeois girl in a Soviet school. I had awful fights and, you see, the mistress did not dare give bad marks to the other girls because their parents would have come round and raised a commotion."

Her mother, Princess Troubetzkoy, is a very good-looking woman—and a successful one too. "When I left Russia," she told me smilingly at tea one afternoon, "I had been only

interested in art, singing, and poetry. My voice was not good enough for singing in public. The poetry I liked was all Russian. So that was useless. All that was left was an interest in art, and I took up painting on glass and lacquer work. In two years I sold 3,500 pieces which I had done myself. I was painting from morning to midnight, and regiments of kindly reporters came and interrupted me to interview me. In 1923, just ten years ago, I started a dress-maker's shop, and it has gone very well. I employ only English people. Is my title a help? No, I don't think it is. Except among one's friends it is rather tiresome. On the one hand, you feel you have to live up to it. On the other hand, clients who would not mind being fitted by Mrs. Smith may sometimes not like to be fitted by a princess. At the moment the business is going very well, and yet, you know, money means very little to me, as long as I have enough to live on, and if I didn't have to work, I wouldn't."

"Oh, wouldn't you?" said her daughter. "I tell you that she would really be lost without the shop to look after."

Another princely family is that of the Dolgoroukis. Prince Serge was attached to the late Empress Marie of Russia, and used to live in Copenhagen. Now that she is dead he sometimes comes from Paris, which is his headquarters, to Frogmore Cottage. Princess Mestchersky looks after Russian children and lives in the South of France. Count Pahlen makes kümmel in Paris, and Baron Rosen makes vodka at Reval in Esthonia. They both come of princely families whose headquarters used to be in the Baltic, and I like both their kümmel and their vodka. Of the others whom I have met, there are the former Princess Zenia of Russia, who married Mr. W. B. Leeds, and Princess Nina of Russia, who married Prince Paul Chavchavadze—the latter works in the Cunard offices in New York.

It was Mrs. Leeds who at first sponsored the woman who

called herself the Grand Duchess Anastasia of Russia, and said that she had been rescued from the wholesale executions of her family by a Polish workman of the name of Tchaikowski, like the composer. The extraordinary thing was that many members of the former Imperial Court at first believed her story, and she went from Bucharest to Berlin, and thence to the United States, before finally, poor dear! her mind wandered a little and she is now in a nursing home for the mentally afflicted in Germany. To-day it is generally admitted that she was not whom she thought she was, even by the former Princess Xenia of Russia. And yet a most interesting book has been written to bolster up her claim by M. Botkine, the son of the Imperial physician who was murdered with the Tsar and knew all the young generation of the Imperial family.

This unfortunate woman made no effort to trade on the fact that she passed as Russian royalty—which is quite the exception to the general rule of would-be princely adventurers. Not so long ago there was that brazen East Side scallywag who called himself Prince Romanoff, and, despite the fact that the French treated him as he deserved, he managed to get back to the United States as a fellow passenger of Marylin Miller and Mr. Andrew Mellon, the American Ambassador in London. Mike whatever-his-name-was wisely kept clear of England. In London there is short shrift for adventurers, particularly those who pass stumer cheques. The authorities ask M. Eugene Sabline to check up on them, and that is that—or nearly always.

On the whole, M. Sabline says that there have been fewer fake Russian princes in England than is generally imagined. "Of course, a number of people have tried it on," he said, "but they are caught out so soon that it does not really matter. "In England nearly all the Russian Royalists have jobs. You *must* have one to be able to live here. In

Paris—the paradise of the poor man—it is not so necessary. Nearly all the Russians in England, except those of princely families, have naturalized themselves—in order to get jobs. On the whole, all of the Russian Royalties have settled down fairly happily to their new life. In the old days it was out of the question for a Prince to be a brewer or a flower shop manager, for example. He lived on the profit of his estates, which were run for him by his agent. He knew nothing of business. To-day he finds that the English are the most traditionally charitable, and that England is the most agreeable haven for a refugee, whether or not he has found some profession at which he can earn a livelihood.”

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## CHAPTER LII

### RUBBER-NECKING ROUND LONDON

SOMEONE had said, "What about a bit of inspired reporting?" And nothing had seemed easier in prospect. I would have 15s. of rubber-necking round London with a charabanc load of American tourists. I would describe their reactions to the scenes that were pointed out to them. I would, so I thought, report in the most inspired fashion the wittier comments of the guide. I would dramatize their personalities and ejaculations. I would . . .

But let us start in a side street near Piccadilly. It is a fine morning, and a half a dozen postcard sellers, newspaper boys, and others push their wares under our noses. I have taken seat No. 16, so as to be in the centre of the party, for there are thirty-two of us. On my right was a school teacher from Milwaukee. Behind me were her mother and sister. Immediately in front of me were two women from Denver. Half-right was the prettiest girl in the party, who came from Long Island, and soon shouldered off the youth from Ohio who sat next to her, though chumming up in St. Paul's Cathedral with the brother and sister from Westchester County. Elsewhere in the coach were four college girls from Columbia, one of whom wore an identity disc on her left ankle, wrote shorthand notes of what the guide said, and carried a movie camera; and two horn-spectacled elderly brothers, one of whom was a deaf dentist who had married late, lost his wife, and was now trying to forget. Their name was Curtis. I soon picked up this bit of gossip from Miss Milwaukee, because she and her mother and sister had sat in the same motor-coach in Rome, Naples, and Heidelberg,

and they had been told the story in Rome. There was also a woman in a red hat who came from Boston and had been to the Tower of London before, and a rather prosperous party of four who discussed contract bridge all the time. Such was the material on which the guide had to work—a nice little man in a grey suit, who did his job thoroughly efficiently—but of that later.

As we took our seats, old Mrs. Milwaukee said, "Say, this is just like my old rocking-chair." To which her daughter replied, "Wouldn't ya like the Prince of Wales, ma?" pointing to a photograph of the Heir to the Throne held up for her inspection by a street vendor. Another tourist, who wore a straw hat, bought a *New York Herald* for sixpence while his wife said contentedly, "Yeah, she divorced him after twenty-four years." The brothers Curtis chewed gum quietly and contentedly, like nice grey cows. And then we started. Much of what follows was either entirely new to me, and almost entirely forgotten if I had ever known it—largely, I suppose, because I am a Londoner, and have never bothered to inspect the capital for its own sake—but was it interesting to the Americans?

As we turned into Pall Mall East the guide pointed out a statue. "That is your old friend, George III. I thought you'd like to look at him." But nobody did. "And there," he went on, "is the National Gallery. That space is Trafalgar Square, and this statue is George Washington." Northumberland Avenue lay before us. "The Duke of Northumberland lived in this little street. Now hotels have taken his place. Here is the Thames. The Embankment was built eighty years ago. Over there is Waterloo Bridge." We stopped at Cleopatra's Needle. The guide gave it its name, and then explained that it had nothing to do with Cleopatra, that it had been erected first in 3500 B.C., then in 2500 B.C., and then went down in the ship which was bringing

it to England across the Bay of Biscay. A vague interest spread over the faces of the rubber-neckers, though the party at the back were discussing the importance of a hundred honours when you are not vulnerable. The young man from Ohio had already told the girl from Long Island where he came from. Miss Milwaukee had opened up a conversation with me which proved rather desultory, because she could hardly understand a word I said. After a time I wrote words down in my notebook, as if I were dumb, for her to read. What made it still more humiliating for my pronunciation was that Mrs. Milwaukee said she thought I was a Canadian, while her daughter always prefaced any comment of mine which she passed on to her mother by remarking, "This young man says . . ." But do not let me appear churlish. They were charming people, and though they had rushed all over the Continent from Belgium to Italy and Switzerland, and back by Germany, they could still remember pretty well what they had seen. True, they told me that they had stayed opposite the casino at Heidelberg, which puzzled me slightly. That old university town would have gone very gay to have started gambling at this stage in its career. Probably they meant Monte Carlo.

But we are still at Cleopatra's Needle with that vague boredom on the faces of the gallant thirty-two, when the guide pointed out that scar left by the Zeppelin bomb. At once everybody jumped up and looked at it. This gave the clue to both trips, morning and afternoon, that I made with these sightseers. As you will see, it would be difficult to work out a more unimaginative tour of London than this one, though scheduled by a leading tourist agency. And I think I have put my finger exactly on the spot which indicates the reason why Americans prefer Paris and France to London and England. London is treated almost entirely as an historic city full of statues. Its gaiety, full-bloodedness, modernity,

and hospitality are lost in a sea of dreary detail. It is not the fault of the guide that he has to follow this formula of sight-seeing. It is the fault of the tradition. But even the formula is dreary beyond belief.

Once more we started off, and my theory about what interests Americans was borne out by the craning of necks when the Shell-mex offices and the Savoy Hotel were pointed out. Then we drove past the Temple without stopping, and an historical digression on the Knights Templars ensued, together with the information that it was in the Temple Gardens that the red rose which started the Wars of the Roses was picked. Blackfriars Bridge was pointed out, and we were treated to the statement that London has a long religious history, and a reference to Paternoster Row, down which the priests walked, completing the Lord's Prayer at Amen Corner. I liked that bit !

The offices of *The Times* in Queen Victoria Street were pointed out as being those of the biggest newspaper in England (shades of the *Daily Mail* and the *News of the World*) and then in rapid succession we were shown the Church of St. Matthew in the Wardrobe, the headquarters of the Salvation Army, the College of Heralds, and then London Stone—the stone under the grating by St. Swithin's Church from which they measure all distances out of London. I liked that bit too. A statute of William IV, and the Monument, elicited little interest, but a charabanc going in the opposite direction full of laundry hands bound for Southend, with the beer parked on the roof and all the occupants in paper caps, caused wild interest. Here was real life. As we were held up in the traffic, numbers of City workers went by, "Say, I suppose you can get quite used to walking with an umbrella?" observed Mrs. Milwaukee. "It's much like carrying a cane, I suppose." "No," said her daughter. "I guess it would be a real nuisance. I'd never get in step with

it." There again was something human and different about the Londoner that might have had some comment, human or otherwise.

Silence fell on the charabanc as we drove along Tooley Street, broken by a series of interested "Ohs" when the deaf dentist pointed out the offices of the London agents for Swift and Co., the American packers. Soon we passed Mincing Lane, St. Margaret Pattens, and All Hallows, Barking, in which the Americans were only faintly interested despite being told that William Penn was baptized there and John Quincey Adams married there. And so we came to the Tower. The first three beefeaters said they would not be photographed. The sentry, being on duty, could not refuse. Cameras clicked. Here was something alive. Bell Tower was pointed out as the scene of Queen Elizabeth's incarceration. The Bloody Tower and Traitors' Gate followed suit. Then we came to the Crown jewels. Naturally, everyone was interested in them, and I, in particular, to hear that whereas King Edward's crown weighed five pounds, that of King George weighs only nineteen ounces. The origin of the Knights of the Garter, though historical, was human, and so was the sight of the execution block with its wide, shallow space for the shoulders of male victims on one side, and the narrow one for those of the women on the other. The fact that Lord Lovat was the last man to be beheaded in this country; the model of the rack which could add nine agonized inches to the stature of a man; the gibbet in which the corpses of malefactors might swing at the cross-roads for twenty years after their death; and the thumbscrews, all created an agreeable shudder.

By this time, though my flesh was willing, my spirit was weak, and so I left the party to spend another half-hour gazing at relics of the past, while I watched the ravens which are "on the strength" of whatever regiment is

billeted at the Tower and receive their regular rations like any soldier.

Five minutes were then allowed the party for refreshments, and Miss Long Island accepted a glass of cider. "You know," she said confidentially, "I've had enough of these dead places and things. I'm dizzy with them already. I'd like something more human." But alas ! it was time to go on again. Soon the Bank of England came into view, and we were told that it is the London weather which keeps it white on the top and grimy on the sides. Up Cheapside we went, past Bow Church, which I had never recognized as such before, and so to St. Paul's, which, we were told, took thirty-five years to build. No time to feed the pigeons. We went in, and had an interesting though somewhat partisan lecture on Nelson in the crypt, which was made the theme for a suitable reference to the general depression and the fact that England always recovers from her wars. We also saw the tombstones of Turner, Reynolds, Gainsborough and Sir Christopher Wren. "I've not walked as far as this for years," said Miss Long Island. We then entered the charabanc and drove up Fleet Street. The Cheshire Cheese and the *Daily Express* offices were duly pointed out and given their right names. Our way then led past the Old Curiosity Shop, which created great interest, though we were not allowed to stop, and so by way of Lincoln's Inn Fields, where they used to have duels and now have lawn tennis courts, Holborn, and Leicester Square back to our starting-point.

So much for tour No. 1. At 2.30 p.m. we assembled for tour No. 2. The young man from Ohio had retired discomfited. Miss Long Island had changed into a pink coat and skirt. The deaf dentist had his acoustic gadget farther up his chest so as to hear better—which reminded Miss Milwaukee that in Italy it had caused the greatest trouble with the police, who thought it was a kind of illegal camera.

The tourist in the straw hat was accompanied by another woman, and the guide told me that someone had asked him where it was possible to see Gray's *Elegy*.

Again we started off by way of Trafalgar Square and into the Park by way of Admiralty Arch. Pointing to the backs of the mansions in Carlton House Terrace, the guide said that two American Ambassadors had lived there, and then designated over the tree tops the houses of the Duke of Marlborough and Lord Lonsdale, St. James's Palace, and Marlborough House. "The Prince of Wales won't live there," he said. "I don't know why—any more than I know why he is a bachelor." He also picked out Clarence House, where the Duke of Connaught lives—a thing I did not know myself—and the London Museum. Opposite the Victoria Memorial, which he said cost £300,000, we stopped facing Buckingham Palace. "Say, I've got to get the Royal Guards," said the American girl with the identity disc round her left ankle. "Will we see the King?" anxiously asked the man in the straw hat—whose first remark this was. "No, he's gone to Balmoral," said the guide; and added, as we came to the arch at Hyde Park Corner, "Only the King and Queen may go through the main gate. If any of you on board are Royalties, I'll take the chance." This was the only instance we had all day of the guide-humour which I had noticed so much last summer in Belgium and Germany.

We then drove the few yards of Piccadilly between us and Park Lane. The houses "napped" were the Duke of Wellington's, Lord Rothschild's, Lord Allendale's, and the Duke and Duchess of York's. "Not very pretentious," the guide observed. Everyone stared with unconcealed interest, particularly Miss Milwaukee, who was a bit of a sentimentalist. Entering Park Lane, the guide stigmatized it as the street of millionaires who have no money. The buildings "napped" in Park Lane were Londonderry House, Lord Brassey's house

and Sir Philip Sassoon's. We also made a detour of Chesterfield House, and the guide spoke of Lord Clanricarde romantically leaving all his money to Lord Harewood; we could have done with more of that. In Grosvenor Square the only house pointed out was the Duke of Portland's. Lady Cunard did not come in for any mention. Driving down Brook Street we went straight across Bond Street without a pause and into Oxford Street by way of Hanover Square, Regent Street, and Oxford Circus. Lord Derby's town house was pointed out, but Miss Milwaukee was much more interested in Woolworth's; while the deaf dentist ejaculated, "Say, look. There's 'Walk-overs.' I guess we'll have to stay here a day or two longer." Passing Marble Arch, the guide explained how the middle gate had been found too narrow for the State coach and so had been transplanted from its intended site at Buckingham Palace. He also told us that the lamp standard was the exact site of the old gallows, and that the smallest house in London, which is a few yards along Bayswater Road, had been bought for a thousand pounds by the man who lived next door. Every camera was trained on it. Here again was something human and unusual. We then entered the Park by Lancaster Gate, "Say, it looks kinda dilapidated," said Miss Milwaukee, adding, as she saw a couple under a tree, "Yet maybe it's just like any park." Several children were playing with bats and balls in Kensington Gardens. "That is the English game of cricket," said the guide sadly. In the distance we could see Kensington Palace, where Princess Marie Louise and Princess Helena Victoria live. "And very good women they are, too," said the guide very properly; "they spend all their time in good works."

Rotten Row in the distance was next explained, and then we crossed the Serpentine, which really looked rather like the Wannsee with all the bathers and row boats. "Some of the

mothers still ride side saddle," added the guide apropos the Row, as we drove out towards the Albert Hall with everyone craning to see the American Ambassador's private house in Prince's Gardens.

An hour then followed in Westminster Abbey. I am ashamed to say it, but I had never before seen the Chapel of St. Edward, nor even the Coronation Chair with the stone of Scone and the carvings of Westminster schoolboys. Nor had I ever entered the Henry VII Chapel—with the banners of the knights and its marvellously carved stone ceiling. But after that the spirit again grew weak and I went and talked with the driver of the charabanc outside. And as we talked I thought, perhaps boastfully, what a much better tour of London I would plan out if I were a tourist agent. No, it would not be all night clubs. But I would certainly drive them all along Piccadilly and round Piccadilly Circus and up Bond Street. I would show them Cartier's and the Embassy Club. I would show them St. Margaret's, Westminster, and tell them it was the smartest church at which to be married, with one or two anecdotes of brides and bridegrooms who were late. I would show them the Temple Church and the Crusaders' tombs. I would point out Child's Bank in Fleet Street where they used to have seats for favoured clients to see the processions. At Westminster Abbey I would allow them only half an hour, but would show them the wax effigies of Queen Elizabeth and Charles II and the Duchess of Richmond and her parrot. (Perhaps the guide was doing this while I was thinking it all out, but no matter.) I would take them in for twenty minutes to one of the non-stop variety shows to sample English humour. I would give them at least ten minutes in the Tate Gallery and the Café Royal, and another twenty at the Wallace Collection and the London Museum (to satisfy those who had historical and artistic leanings). I would drive them up St. James's Street

and show them the famous clubs, and point out a few old codgers in the window armchairs. I would show them the exteriors of the Ritz and the British Museum and the American Club. . . .

As I pondered on all this my eye fell on a programme for an East-end tour which included Limehouse—London's China town. Well, well well! Of course the guide could refer to Billie Carlton and Brilliant Chang, but what would they mean to people who come from the land of Al Capone?

At that moment the party returned. "What have you learnt?" I asked Miss Long Island.

"Oh, I'm far too dizzy to tell you all," was the reply. "Let me see. Something about Mary Queen of Scots, and the Poets' Corner, and the Painters' Corner, and the Statesmen's Corner—all kinds of corners. Say, have you a lucky strike?"

I had. She puffed wearily as we drove up Whitehall, past the Cenotaph, and Downing Street, and the United Services Institute, where the guide pointed out the window where King Charles had his head cut off. Once again we were back at our starting point.

"Say," said Miss Long Island, "if you aren't doing anything in particular, what about being my personal guide for the next hour or so, on the strict understanding that you don't show me any statues or tombs or corners?"

Ten minutes later we were drinking sherry cobbler at the Dorchester. "You know," said Miss Long Island ruminatively, "I believe that you are going to make a very good guide indeed."

## CHAPTER LIII

### THE PRICE OF A BLOW

YES, as Billy Bennett (Almost a Gentleman) might have said, "There's gold in them thar gloves."

After conversations with Jeff Dickson and his new rival, A. J. Elvin, of Wembley, I have secured some interesting figures about the earnings of the principal boxers during 1934. It does not by any means follow that there will be any parallel between these figures and those for 1935. In fact, there will probably be no parallel whatever. What makes a boxer's life so exciting is not so much the fact that he may be knocked out as the fact that if and when he becomes a champion he can command double or treble what he can get merely as the challenger. Prize-fighting, after all, is the only unrehearsed drama which people can pay to see.

At the head of the financial list of prize-fighters in England last year we must put Jack Petersen, who made £9,500 in four fights. Next comes Len Harvey, whose gloves earned him £9,350. Neusel made £7,500; Gains collected £4,000; Mizler made something in the neighbourhood of £3,000; George Cook earned about £2,500 (if as much); Jack Doyle for his solitary appearance was paid £1,000.

Harvey's case is particularly interesting. In September of 1933, he was prepared to offer his services to anybody for £300 for a fight. Jeff Dickson matched him with Petersen and paid him £500. Harvey was delighted. He also won the fight, and was thus able to command £2,000 to fight Gains for the latter's Empire title in January. Gains was also paid £2,000. Having defeated Gains, Harvey's drawing capacity was increased, and he was paid £5,000 for his fight with Petersen at the White City in June, Petersen receiving

£3,000. His next fight with Jimmy Tarrante, which ended unsatisfactorily because Harvey refused to wear Dickson's foul-proof protector, was not important, and only brought him £1,100. For his fight with Neusel at Wembley he received £1,250.

Petersen, having lost his title to Harvey in the October fight of 1933, was paid £3,000, as I have said, to fight Harvey in June of last year. Having won the title from him in this fight, he commanded £4,000 for his fight with Gains in September, for which Gains received £2,000. The balance of £2,000 is what he was paid for fighting George Cook, Cook receiving £1,000. These two men now face the future with very similar chances since Petersen's defeat by Neusel in February 1935. By the by, Neusel was paid £6,000 by a German promoter to fight Schmeling in Hamburg last summer. This was the top price for one performance last year. Harvey, on the other hand, cannot look forward to more than £1,000 at the outside for his next fight, which will presumably be with Gains.

Mizler opened the year's fighting programme with his fight against Johnny Cuthbert at the time that Mizler was coming up from the East End and Cuthbert was on the down grade. As you recall, it was a good decision and a fine fight to watch. Unfortunately the victory went to Mizler's head, or rather to his manager's head, and Dickson could not entice him into the ring against a class fighter for nine months. Ultimately the British Board of Boxing Control forced him to fight Kid Berg, who proved in ten rounds that Mizler was not a champion. Mizler was paid £1,500 for this fight, having got £500 to meet Cuthbert. His other fights during the year at the Ring, Blackfriars, and other halls probably brought him in £1,000 in the form of £60, £125, £200, and the like.

The next fight after the Mizler-Cuthbert clash was between Larry Gains and Harvey on February 8, which drew exactly

£6,763 5s. 5d. I have already given the figures of what the boxers were paid. It was a bad fight and the less said about it the better. Meantime, Petersen was anxious to make his come-back after his defeat by Harvey, and was matched on March 8 against Ben Foord, the champion of South Africa, whom he beat. The prize-money for this fight was not disclosed to me, but one can guess there was not more than £500 at the outside for Petersen.

Jeff Dickson then tried to revive Jack Doyle, and on March 19 put him against Borrington, which was to have been the first of four contests. Jeff reckoned that because of Jack Doyle's colourful personality he would be a draw. He was not. The receipts were £1,017. £1,000 of this was paid to Doyle, leaving £17 for the rest of the bouts, the hire of the hall, and all the overhead expenses. The fight did not last out one round, and included probably the most expensive punch that Jeff Dickson can recall—it cost him a matter of £850 for the blow.

After the Harvey-Tarrant fight Dickson matched Seaman Watson with Al Brown, but four days before the fight in May the British Board of Boxing Control disqualified Al Brown for some incident in Mexico. Then came the Harvey-Petersen championship fight, followed by the Petersen-Gains fight. Both duly took place on beautiful evenings. October was to have seen the clash between Obie Walker and Pettifer, but the British Board of Boxing Control put up a ban saying that Obie Walker was too good for the Englishman. Next came the fight between Dave Crowley and Freddy Miller, the world's champion, at the Albert Hall. It was a poor fight. This was followed by the Mizler-Berg clash. The illness of Tunero prevented his fighting MacAvoy at the Albert Hall on November 8. Later on in Manchester MacAvoy put Tunero back to bed. Jeff Dickson's last promotion was the Cook-Petersen fight.

Until last October, 1934, Jeff Dickson had more or less a monopoly of prize-fighting promotion in England. With the erection of the Wembley sports arena, however, A. J. Elvin came into the market, and staged the Harvey-Neusel fight, the figures of which I have already given. He followed this up by matching Tarleton, the champion, with Dave Crowley, for which Tarleton was paid £650 and Crowley £350. An interesting situation has thus arisen. The stadium at Wembley has 9,700 seats compared with the 5,000 at the Albert Hall. This evidently gives Elvin a great advantage, even though it is farther away. On the other hand, nearly all the Continental fighters are under contract to Jeff Dickson, and sooner or later Elvin will be needing to go outside this country for his contesters. Humery, Marcel Thil, and Locatelli are all under Jeff Dickson's control. It is true that Neusel and Seelig are available for Elvin, but they are the exceptions to the rule. Jeff Dickson also has this advantage, that, in addition to the Albert Hall, he has outlets for his boxers in Paris, in Spain, and in other parts of the Continent.

So far Jeff Dickson says, "At the present time I am not putting up a fight against Wembley. I am waiting until Elvin comes to earth. Then there will be a battle. Any promoter that wrecks the system of percentage payments which it has taken years to establish and is usual all over the world will find that it is only he who suffers. By that system I mean that no fighter is worth more than what he is able to draw. I give a percentage on the gate, but that is all. I do not give a percentage on the sale of the programmes or a percentage on the receipts from the catering and the car parks. What has 1934's boxing proved? It has proved that there will be a scrap between Elvin and myself in London."

Jeff Dickson refused to say what fight he considered would be the best this year. My own feeling is that the middle-weight title contested between Marcel Thil and

MacAvoy at the correct weights must be the greatest fight of 1935. And I expect that Jeff will arrange for this. Elvin has other views. He considers that the best fight that 1935 could produce would be between Jack Petersen and Steve Hamas, who is fourth on the world's heavy-weight list. After the poor display, however, that Petersen put up against Neusel, it seems to me that Steve Hamas, who will in any event be probably fighting Max Baer for the world title in July, would eat our champion, if indeed he condescended to come over and make this meal of him. Whatever 1935 produces, however, it is certain that Neusel, unless he goes sick, must make at least £7,000, and he will probably earn more. If Harvey and Gains make half of what they made in 1934 they will both be lucky in my opinion.

On the other hand, Seelig, the expatriated German Jew middle-weight, who earned only £225 in his two fights in England last year, has every chance of making £3,000 or £4,000 in 1935. His slashing victory over Brennan made him very popular with the fans.

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